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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## MRS. DALLOWAY: A STUDY IN COMPOSITION

NATHALIA WRIGHT<sup>1</sup>

An examination of Virginia Woolf's technique in the construction of *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals a novel which is primarily neither a narrative nor a character sketch. It is a thematic study, juxtaposing certain patterns for purely aesthetic ends. These patterns are not themes in the traditional sense; that is, none constitutes a text, upon which a story, like *Vanity Fair* or *The Scarlet Letter*, may be told. They are, more properly, elements of composition, bearing a structural relationship to one another and involving no plot at all.

These elements—of characters, psychological states, sounds, and colors—are not unique in Mrs. Woolf. The presence of each may be pointed to in all her novels and, indeed, in many other novels of the present century. However, in *Mrs. Dalloway* their recurrence as themes is most deliberate and their ultimate synthesis one of her most brilliant achievements.

### I

Four character groups are distinguishable in *Mrs. Dalloway*: the group of Clarissa, Richard, and Elizabeth Dalloway, Hugh and Evelyn Whitbread, Sally Seton, Lady Bruton, and Doris Kilman; the group of Peter Walsh and Daisy

Simmons; the group of Septimus and Lucrezia Warren Smith, Dr. Holmes, Sir William and Lady Bradshaw, and Evans; and the group of 116 minor characters.

The primary position of the Clarissa theme is obvious: it occurs in the title, at the beginning and end of the book, and on more than half the pages. By manipulation it also appears for a moment in a third place of prominence in the novel—the exact middle, at a prominent hour, high noon—thus dividing in half the book and the day.

The secondary nature of the Peter Walsh theme is evident in the relationship that exists between him and Clarissa. In the early days of their acquaintance "they went in and out of each other's minds without any effort." And, though "they might be parted for hundreds of years," Clarissa would suddenly wonder what Peter would say of this or that, and Peter would have an abrupt vision of their last meeting:

.... In absence, in the most unlikely places, it would flower out, open, shed its scent, let you touch, taste, look about you, get the whole feel of it and understanding, after years of lying lost.

The third theme is the complement of the first. That Septimus and Mrs. Dalloway are doubles and that in the first ver-

<sup>1</sup> Maryville College, Tennessee.

sion, in which Septimus did not exist, Mrs. Dalloway was to kill herself, has been acknowledged by Mrs. Woolf.<sup>2</sup> The most overwhelming internal evidence of this relationship occurs when Clarissa, postulating three reasons for ending her own life, hits in the middle upon the very one which had driven Septimus to fling himself down upon the railings: the intolerable pressure exerted upon the soul by passionless men. Her other reasons—fear and the impossibility of communication—were also problems of Septimus', who feared the world's coming to an end before his eyes and whose poems and drawings failed so desperately to pluck the truth from the universe. Thus brooding, Mrs. Dalloway felt "somehow it was her disaster—her disgrace"; and again "she felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself."<sup>3</sup>

The summarizing fourth theme—the theme of the English national character—is represented by the entire group of minor characters. Throughout the novel Mrs. Woolf exhibits a Shakespearean penchant for individualizing unimportant people. Of the crowds that throng the pages of *Mrs. Dalloway*, 116 are named and in varying detail epitomized.

Thus, to enumerate a few, Mrs. Filmer's serving girl is Agnes, the housemaid at Bourton who saw Sally Seton run naked down the hall was Ellen Atkins, and in his dream Peter calls for Mrs. Turner to clear the things away. Lady Bruton's secretary is Milly Brush, whose brother is doing poorly in Portsmouth. Mrs. Carrie Dempster—watching the airplane—has bad feet, and her

nephew is a missionary. The child with her nurse in Regent's Park is Elise Mitchell, Daisy's husband is Major Simmons, and her friend in Peter's absence is Major Orde. Even Elizabeth's dog Grizzle and Lady Bruton's pony Patty are named.

The peculiarity of this fourth theme lies in its relationship to the other three. Characteristically, it does not run parallel but cuts across them at right angles; that is, individual minor characters are constantly crossing the paths of Clarissa or Peter or Septimus, but, without altering their courses, they immediately pass from sight.<sup>4</sup> More than a hundred such encounters may be noted. In this fashion, although never continuing long at a time, the fourth theme appears a far greater number of times than any other. Its parallel treatment, on the other hand, occupies only about one-fifth of the book. On two occasions major and minor characters are gathered into one group—at the strategic positions of the opening and closing of the book.

From the beginning to the end of the novel, thirteen major shifts of character theme may be noted, exclusive of the incidental appearances of minor characters.<sup>5</sup> They occur in this order: Clarissa, English national character, Septimus, Clarissa, Peter, Septimus, Peter, Septimus, Clarissa, Septimus, Peter, Clarissa, English national character; which, when broken down, appears as a distinct scheme:

a b c a d c d c a c d a b.

For the most part, only one theme occurs at a time. However, on occasion two and

<sup>2</sup> *Mrs. Dalloway* ("Modern Library" ed.), p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> See also pp. 142, 279-82; their attentions are united by the motorcar and the airplane; Peter Walsh and Sir William Bradshaw go back and forth between them.

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 42, 59, 97, 203, 242-44.

<sup>5</sup> Whereas, of a total of 293 pages, Clarissa occupies 153, Peter 123, the English national character 69, and Septimus 64, the actual number of appearances of Clarissa is 4, of Septimus 4, of Peter 3, and of the English national character 2.



three appear simultaneously and at the end all four in a grand finale.<sup>6</sup>

## II

Likewise, four psychological themes may be noted in the novel, corresponding, in general, with the characters Clarissa, Peter, Septimus, and the English national character.

The consciousness of the self—the problem preoccupying not only Mrs. Woolf but most important novelists since Proust—receives in the character of Clarissa full embodiment.<sup>7</sup> Her transcendental theory of personality, shared with Peter, grows out of her own heightened sensibility. It is described while she is looking in the mirror:

.... Clarissa.... plunged into the very heart of the moment, transfixed it, there—the moment of this June morning on which was the pressure of all the other mornings, seeing the glass, the dressing-table, and all the bottles afresh, collecting the whole of her at one point (as she looked into the glass), seeing the delicate pink face of the woman who was that very night to give a party; of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself.

How many million times she had seen her face, and always with the same imperceptible contraction! She pursed her lips when she looked in the glass. It was to give her face point. That was her self—pointed; dart-like; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point.... for the lonely to come to. ....

The secondary theme of memory, essentially part of the whole problem of consciousness, is recognized in more than one relationship of Peter Walsh. In the

Bourton retrospect, which forms so large a part of the novel, Peter is the central character. He and Clarissa think of each other only in terms of the past. Peter is also, in the role of a Britisher returned home after some years, constantly comparing the times:

Those five years—1918 to 1923—had been, he suspected, somehow very important. People looked different. Newspapers seemed different. Now for instance there was a man writing quite openly in one of the respectable weeklies about water-closets. That you couldn't have done ten years ago—written quite openly about water-closets in a respectable weekly. And then this taking out a stick of rouge, or a powder-puff and making up in public. On board ship coming home there were lots of young men and girls—Betty and Bertie he remembered in particular—carrying on quite openly; the old mother sitting and watching them with her knitting, cool as a cucumber. The girl would stand still and powder her nose in front of every one. And they weren't engaged; just having a good time; no feelings hurt on either side.<sup>8</sup>

The theme of self-annihilation, personified in Septimus,<sup>9</sup> is the complement of the theme of consciousness. Their relationship is symbolized in the psychological, though never physical, contact of Clarissa and Septimus. Part of Clarissa's self-consciousness is the anticipation of its dissolution. Two quotations recur in her mind, much as the deceased Evans recurs to Septimus: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" and "If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy." The former is once transferred without motivation to Septimus' consciousness,<sup>10</sup> and

<sup>6</sup> The interplay of past and present is constant throughout the book: in the reminiscences of Clarissa walking up Bond Street, the character of Sally Seton—Lady Rosseter, Lady Bruton's memories of her childhood, the hallucinations of Septimus Smith, the conversion of Miss Kilman, and the general disillusion of the war still shadowing English life.

<sup>7</sup> It is nonetheless present at each of the thirteen major shifts of character (see pp. 13, 23, 33, 46, 88, 100, 117, 118, 139, 192, 226, 231, 271, 275, 280-82).

<sup>10</sup> P. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Pp. 19-42, 59-72, 250-96.

<sup>7</sup> The contrast may be noted throughout the book of normal consciousness, from the dullest to the most sharpened, with Septimus' abnormal consciousness, Peter's dream consciousness, and consciousness of the past.



his motives for suicide are transferred to her.

In the minds of both Septimus and Clarissa there are two aspects of annihilation, one more terrifying than the other: the death of the body and the death of the soul. It is to save his soul, which is menaced by Holmes and Bradshaw with their "must," "must," that Septimus destroys his body. To Septimus' disordered brain these two appear as brutes preying upon him—an image essentially shared by Clarissa, Rezia, and Bradshaw's other patients. In the picture of the sister-goddesses, Proportion and Conversion, the whole hideous process of overpowering the human will is laid bare, and in Lady Bradshaw the results so greatly feared by Septimus are exhibited.

In Clarissa's circle it is Miss Kilman who threatens the soul:

Love and religion! thought Clarissa, going back into the drawing-room, tingling all over. How detestable, how detestable they are! For now that the body of Miss Kilman was not before her, it overwhelmed her—the idea. The cruelest things in the world, she thought, seeing them clumsy, hot, domineering, hypocritical, eavesdropping, jealous, infinitely cruel and unscrupulous, dressed in a mackintosh coat, on the landing; love and religion. Had she ever tried to convert any one herself? Did she not wish everybody merely to be themselves? And she watched out of the window the old lady opposite climbing upstairs. Let her climb upstairs if she wanted to; let her stop; then let her, as Clarissa had often seen her, gain her bedroom, part her curtains, and disappear again into the back-ground. Somehow one respected that—that old woman looking out of the window, quite unconscious that she was being watched. There was something solemn in it—but love and religion would destroy that, whatever it was, the privacy of the soul. The odious Kilman would destroy it.

In Peter Walsh's mind, by a curious return of the circle, it is Clarissa herself who is identified with spiritual death.

Awakening from his dream in the park, he finds himself repeating the words, "the death of the soul," and associating them with an occurrence at Bourton: Clarissa's discovery that an acquaintance of hers had given birth to a child out of wedlock:

He hadn't blamed her for minding the fact, since in those days a girl brought up as she was, knew nothing, but it was her manner that annoyed him; timid; hard; something arrogant; unimaginative; prudish. "The death of the soul." He had said that instinctively, ticketing the moment as he used to do—the death of her soul.

Finally, there is the theme of nationalism, introduced by the minor characters. Taken as a group they represent the complete structure of English society—lords, ladies, a prime minister, colonels, majors, shopkeepers, artists, a professor, doctors, ministers, lawyers, politicians, housemaids, butlers. Of the 116, 12 are from the serving class, 36 from the bourgeois, and 68 from the aristocracy.

In this populous world of English society, the relatively few major characters of *Mrs. Dalloway*—there are at most 16—come and go. They are never far out of it, and at times they lose themselves in it to become temporarily mere British subjects.<sup>11</sup>

### III

Whereas the themes of character and psychological states are matters of content, the theme of sound, or time, is formal. Though highly emotional in sub-

<sup>11</sup> See pp. 5, 19-42, 209, 210, 275. Other manifestations of this theme, like the other three diffused through the novel, are the symbolic motorcar, the projects of Lady Bruton, the background presence of British India, Richard Dalloway's love of monarchy, Clarissa's love of London, Peter Walsh's love of British civilization, and the presence of Minister Baldwin at Clarissa's party—the "symbol of what they all stood for, English society."

stance, in form Mrs. Woolf is a classicist, imposing upon her characters' streams of consciousness a strict limitation.

The form in *Mrs. Dalloway*, undivided as the novel is by chapters, consists of certain periods of time, intellectually conceived and repeatedly defined. Following the compressed tradition of *Ulysses*, the novel opens with Big Ben sounding 10:00 A.M. and closes on the stroke of three the following morning. Fifteen times the sound of clocks striking reverberates through the book, noting, in all, ten different hours and accompanied by two repeated images: "The leaden circles dissolved in the air" and "the sound fading up there among the gulls." These nine divisions of time are:

10:00-11:00, 11:00-11:30, 11:30-11:45, 11:45-12:00, 12:00-1:30, 1:30-3:00, 3:00-3:30, 3:30-6:00, 6:00-3:00. Reduced to minutes the pattern is

60 30 15 15 90 90 30 150 540.

A progression is immediately apparent: the time being reduced by half in the first three divisions, then repeated, then stepped up to equal the first two, then repeated. The nine-hour division at the end is virtually the total of the preceding eight divisions.

Between these divisions of time and the alternating appearances of the characters there is a general correspondence. Whereas at each sound of the clock there is a shift from one character to another, there are seven shifts unaccompanied by clocks. In any case the functional relationship between the two remains the same: the consciousness of the characters is not allowed to wander on freely in time and space but is recalled periodically by the confinement of a particular moment.

Further examination of the relation-

ship between the characters and these periods of time into which the novel is divided demonstrates Mrs. Woolf's theory, expounded in *Orlando*, of the "discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind." Although the external action of the book occupies only seventeen hours—about eleven devoted to Clarissa, ten to Peter, six to the English national character, and three to Septimus—the time covered simultaneously within the minds of the characters is about sixty years, or from Lady Bruton's Devonshire childhood.

Recollections of this past are diffused through the novel from two points, the summer of 1889 at Bourton and the war years of 1914-18; and, though it is impossible to isolate all these memories, the occurrence of protracted retrospects may be noted. They have a rhythmical pattern of their own, their extent varying inversely with the time divisions simultaneously noted by the clocks:

minutes.....	60	30	15	15	90	90	30	150	540
pages.....	2	9	10	19	1	2	2	4	7

As the present becomes shorter, the past becomes longer. Whereas the account of Lady Bruton's luncheon, for example, occurring between the hours of 1:30 and 3:00, is related at the rate of twenty-four pages to ninety minutes, the Smiths' fifteen-minute walk from Regent's Park to Harley Street takes up the same amount of space. The difference is to be accounted for by the fact that more than half the pages are devoted to a résumé of Septimus' life and cover a period of over ten years.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The theme of time is also notable in the date (Wednesday, mid-June, 1923), in the three appointments around which the action eddies (12:00, 1:30, and [9:00], if the last hour may be assigned to Clarissa's party), and in the sense of time on the minds of all the major characters (see pp. 44, 74, 75, 83, 170, 192, 193, 208, 210).

## IV

The thematic use of color in *Mrs. Dalloway* is another matter of form. Opening with the riot of hues in Mulberry's flower shop, the book closes in the midst of the bright costumes of Clarissa's guests. Between the two, an extrication of certain colors and an association of them with certain characters or character groups take place.

The color for Clarissa is green. Seven times the color of her green evening dress, upon which she sews in the morning and which she wears at night, is remarked; in it she is described as a mermaid. Earlier she is compared to a "blue-green" jay. The Dalloway house has green lights and green linoleum on the bathroom floor. Peter remembers "the vivid green moss" near the fountain, where she refused to marry him. Miss Kilman, a member of the Clarissa group, wears a green mackintosh, and Elizabeth Dalloway is compared to a hyacinth, "sheathed in glossy green."

For Peter the color is blue—the color lying next in the spectrum. In Sally Seton's mind he is associated with the image of blue hydrangeas. He blows rings of blue smoke from his cigar in the park. He receives a letter from Clarissa written on blue stationery; they sit on a blue sofa together; and the evening through which he walks to her party is compared to a woman in blue and pearls.

Red is the color associated with Septimus. He has a persistent image of the world bursting into flames before his gaze and another of being pursued by a beast with "blood-red nostrils." His bedroom is papered with red roses, and he once imagines red flowers are growing up through him. His friend Evans, part of the Septimus group, was red-headed. In his end the color of blood is implied. In connection with the relatively small

amount of space and time occupied in the book by Septimus, an admittedly vital character, this choice seems significant. For red has the strongest wave length in the spectrum, ranging from 0.723 to 0.647 mm. as compared with 0.575–0.492 for green and 0.492–0.455 for blue.

These three colors are complementary. In order to complete the symbolism, therefore, white should be associated with the English national character. Although this image is not so dominant as the other three, it does appear. The airplane, upon which the attention of all London is fixed, flies into and out of white clouds, writing in white smoke; when Elizabeth mingled with the crowds in the Strand "the clouds were of mountainous white"; Peter sits next to a "grey nurse" in the park; the upholstery of the royal motor car is grey; from it "the pale light of the immortal presence fell upon them"; and Clarissa thought she knew who was inside, for

she had seen something white, circular, in the footman's hand, a disc inscribed with a name,—the Queen's, the Prince of Wales, the Prime Minister's?—which, by force of its own lustre burnt its way through (Clarissa saw the car diminishing, disappearing), to blaze among candelabras, glittering stars, breasts stiff with oak leaves, Hugh Whitbread and all his colleagues, the gentlemen of England, that night in Buckingham Palace.

In addition to these simple parallels between colors and characters, there appears to be an attempt to connect Mrs. Dalloway and Septimus Smith by means of an intermediate color. Whereas the use of green, blue, and red is largely confined to the three major characters, yellow, lying between red and green in the spectrum, is applied equally to Clarissa and Septimus. She wears a yellow hat, her living room has yellow curtains, her husband, who is fair-haired,



has yellow gloves, her daughter rides a yellow bus. Septimus, on the other hand, notices yellow flowers from the top of a bus, repeatedly looks at the yellow bananas on the sideboard, watches the sunlight making a gold spot on the wall.<sup>13</sup>

## V

The coherence of *Mrs. Dalloway* is the more remarkable for the kaleidoscopic nature of its parts. Characters, psychological states, sounds, and colors are taken up in no logical sequence. They are introduced irregularly, abruptly dropped, and intertwined with a good deal of complexity. To relate these fragments Mrs. Woolf has been assiduous in employing unifying devices. First among these is the theme of nationalism, its function inherent in its very nature. A second is the theme of time, which, also reiterated, brings certain characters together by appointment, accounts for the transition made from one psychological theme to another, and is on the mind of every major character.

There is, finally, the use of mechanical links, without which no shift is made from one character to another: the simple meeting of two persons,<sup>14</sup> the joining of two people by a third,<sup>15</sup> and, most contrived of all, the use of inanimate objects to connect people. Of the latter Mrs. Woolf employs a notable variety: the motorcar, the airplane, the clocks of Harley and Oxford Streets, the clouds in the sky over the Strand, and the ambulance. None of these objects, unless it is the ambulance, bears any internal relation to the characters or possesses inher-

ent value as a conjunction. The selection is entirely arbitrary; but, once made, each is converted by purely intellectual processes into a pertinent symbol.

Far above these joints of the novel, however, a greater unity is achieved by the author's method of dealing with her elements of composition. Mrs. Woolf's style is not fluid; one character does not merge into another, or one theme or one moment into another. Her novel is distinctly put together of parts, but recurring and interrelated parts. Her style is contrapuntal, and the unity of the novel is not one of flow but of rhythm.

The counterpoint of *Mrs. Dalloway* is most distinct between the character appearances and the time divisions, a relationship which may be pictured by setting down the two patterns:<sup>16</sup>

60 minutes....	30	15	15	90	90	30	150	540
2 pages.....	9	10	19	1	2	2	4	7
	abc	a, d	c d, c	a	c	dab		

While time and personality are the main rhythms in *Mrs. Dalloway*, they are not the only ones. There are the additional rhythms of recurring psychological themes and color themes. These four alternate simultaneously with one another, within themselves, and within their subdivisions. In the rhythms which are thus created, correspondence and antithesis are as great factors as repetition: the correspondence between certain characters, certain psychological states, and certain colors; the antithesis of Clarissa and Septimus, of the themes of consciousness and dissolution, of the past

<sup>13</sup> Unlike the color symbolism in *To the Lighthouse*, these colors do not possess independent meaning; that is, green does not symbolize consciousness, or blue memory, or red death; they match the character themes rather than the psychological themes of the book.

<sup>14</sup> Pp. 59, 106, 250 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Pp. 98, 122-24.

<sup>16</sup> This relationship has been analyzed by Mr. Daiches in a diagram illustrating the regular alternation of the categories of time and space, or personality (*The Novel and the Modern World* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939], pp. 174-76). Actually, his is more of a formula than a chart, emphasizing the alternation of two themes rather than the simultaneous movement of several.

and present in inverse ratio, of the complementary colors red and blue-green, of emotional substance and intellectual form.

*Mrs. Dalloway*, indeed, is an easier novel to diagram than to summarize. If it does have a text it must be something like this: Every British subject has two possessions which are in a curious way one—consciousness and memory—both

of which he will one day be deprived of by the death of the body.

A book which has this for a story, in which characters are ultimately reduced to shades of the spectrum and time to the striking of clocks, it is impertinent to abstract. Only the recurring themes of personality, of mental states, of colors and sounds may be charted. The composition is the thing.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF DRAMA

THOMAS H. UZZELL<sup>1</sup>

The principles of drama are essentially simple; their embodiment in fiction less so. Of all human responses the dramatic is the most interesting. No novel of any importance has been published without it.

The basic mechanism of life is response to stimulus; and response is composed of thinking, feeling, and acting. Conduct becomes significant, i.e., reveals "character," only when these three elements are found in it. Obviously, not all mental activity is significant. Routine mathematical calculation, directing one's steps when one is talking, daydreaming, and the like involve nervous reactions but not true thinking. No emotion would accompany such automatic actions. Some emotion, however, is to be found in all genuine thinking, all the calculations which mingle impulse and habit.

This conflict between impulse and habit is the very core of all experience—revealing, really creating, character and producing the fictional emotional appeal.

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We have a simple example in the most popular of all story-plot beginnings, i.e., boy meets girl. Before he meets her, he does not love her; afterward, he does love her. Thus a new trait has been born and the boy's character to this extent altered. Where is the conflict? On first meeting her, his habit says, "Take it easy; she's a stranger; better wait for an introduction," but his impulse (instinct) says: "Oh, to meet her; what a lovely face, what music her voice, what happiness to talk to her!" Habit says "Go"; impulse says "Stop." Enter deliberation, genuine thinking, and decision, finally action. He speaks to her, and habit is bent like an old hat stepped on. Action following inner conflict, bathed in emotion, directed by intelligence, sets up a new and exciting habit which soon settles into a groove.

Emotion may be defined as the state of body produced by a sudden interference with behavior. First sensation, then impulse, then clash of habit with impulse. Reason now appears on the job, supervises things, rehearses possibilities in imagination, until either reason fortifies habit and old paths are trodden again



or fresh impulses break through habit, a revolution is on, and someone isn't what he used to be! Clash, then physical agitation, then action, or, if the occasion be violent, necessitating immediate action, the order might be clash, action, then physical agitation. In this natural history of emotion we locate the source of both "human interest" and character drama.

Drama is not better understood among writers partly because it is construed as some kind of arbitrary device for tricking up life to make it hot. Drama is not something done to life; drama is life. The well-worn "to be or not to be" is a formula for all existence that has any meaning.

I am referring to drama in this discussion as a device for intensifying certain effects, but in a certain sense drama is not a device; it is, in this sense, no more a device than is breathing or walking. "Exaggeration," says a Chinese proverb, "is to paint a snake and add legs"; but this is not the exaggeration of art. One doesn't exaggerate drama; one merely exaggerates situations from which the actors can escape only by experience inevitably dramatic. Self-expressionists, aesthetes, look askance at plotting "devices," believing that devices are no part of the processes of imagination; and they are right; plotting is, or should be, a work of invention, the rearrangement of *existing* subjects and purposes: imagination should precede and follow invention, giving embodiment to a plan. Planning is impossible without devices.

Dramatic action is nothing more or less than externalization of thinking in a predicament. Conduct which does this "holds our attention" and has that quality prized by newsrooms, radio studios, advertising shops, cartoonists' workrooms, which they call "human interest."

Such conduct does more than merely catch the attention; it holds it by reason of our tendency to be warmed sympathetically by the same emotion that warms the actor; it also by its outcome reveals character.

A human-interest situation is a tiny bit of dramatic action. It may be defined as that type of predicament from which one cannot escape without thought and action; it is vicariously experienced through sight of a man "in a fix" from which he can't escape by simple instinctive impulse or established habits. Skippy, of cartoon fame, is happily listening to a prize fight on the radio when a fire engine roars past the house. A man takes a swim in a pond in the woods and on emerging finds some church ladies picnicking between the pool and his clothes. A boy raids a melon patch and flees with a big one as the owner bears down upon him. He gets himself through a hole in the fence, but the hole won't pass the melon, which he can't abandon. In all these situations we can easily identify the interruption of habit which forces reflection and a new kind of action to escape. In them we find the conduct pattern of the dramatic scenes in all literature.

One of the most poignant and tragic of such scenes is the climax of Conrad's *Lord Jim*, when his hero walks up to Dorian's loaded pistol to atone for his second dereliction in duty. The impulse here is self-preservation; the habit, Lord Jim's honor and sense of duty. Here a conditioned response (habit) defeats the strongest of the instincts in a symbolic triumph of civilization. A parallel scene occurs at the end of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, when Robert Jordan remains behind, wounded, to allow his friends to escape. In that early American classic, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Uncle Tom,

ordered by the heartless Legree to tell where the escaping slaves went, refuses and is himself flogged to death. The same tragic pattern.

In these human-interest inventions of these famous novels we can learn what chiefly made them famous. Although they are rich in action value, they are still richer for the skirmishes in the arena of the actors' minds.

In trying to point out the essential simplicity of the dramatic pattern, I do not wish to imply that a grasp of this pattern insures ability to exploit it in fiction. To see *all* the relevant factors in such situations and to find a style for expressing them is the work of two lifetimes. Many of the most subtle and entrancing effects in fiction are produced in slight dramatic clashes in which something akin to genius is needed to tell what the clash is. Motives may frequently be subconscious; the doer's rationalizations must be penetrated; the role of foresight, arousing new impulses, suppressing some of the original ones, must be traced; transfers of emotion (man kicking the dog because he is angry at his wife) must not distract attention from the true situation; the roles of energy, temperament, intelligence, age, in the struggle for survival among impulses in a dramatic scene must be accurately observed and set down with due proportion and emphasis.

In this internal picture of drama which I have outlined we can identify the two different uses found for it in fiction. The two uses produce what I call the "double ideal" of drama.

One ideal of drama derives from the entertainment or excitement effect it may produce, and the other is the possibility by its use of portraying character with maximum emphasis. Obviously, now, if the effect we have in mind for our

novel is entertainment, the thrills of adventure, melodrama, we must seek situations which will intensify these clashes even if we sacrifice something of character. Again, if our purpose is to produce a novel rich in character values, we must select those situations in which the characters have several opportunities for displaying their traits in reflective action and ultimately in emotional clashes featuring the same opportunity for reflective action and not action upon mere impulse. These two roles of drama offer two devices for intensifying two different possible effects. Each now deserves a few words to indicate its usefulness.

It is a natural necessity for people to view plays and movies and to read fiction. Human beings, like lower animals, are equipped by biological inheritance for fierce struggles to survive. Except in times of war, civilized peoples have almost no occasion to exercise the sympathetic system or the glands for supreme effort under excitement. All of which argues the soundness of Aristotle's theory that our feelings may be "purged" by representations of tragedy and by music. For these reasons men go forth to seek adventure and to run large chances of serious danger. Danger, even when vicariously enjoyed, makes us more alive; we so love to strive or to imagine ourselves striving that we come to love the fear that gives us strength for conflict. This psychology and physiology also underlies much of the appeal of competitive sports. It also accounts for the decreased interest in fiction among more thoughtful readers since the present war began. Publishers tell us that today fact books about the war outsell novels.

I hope I have made it clear that the source of the excitement we call the dramatic is not this outer visible clash with

environment but the *internal clash* which is invisible. Confusion on this point frequently prevents any progress at all in the study of drama. Examples of violent conflicts of the man-and-man type without dramatic interest would be two young men wrestling and laughing with the pleasure of play, two dogs locked in a mortal fight, two bunches of monkeys playing football. The boys are merely releasing play impulses with no *internal* conflicts; the dogs have no true traits; the monkeys would ignore the signals and climb the goal-posts. These actions might be interesting, but the interest would not be dramatic interest.

A hunter might meet a bear in the forest, tangle with the animal, feel the great beast's paws about his neck; and roll over and over with him on the ground—with no dramatic interest whatever. The man is one of the keepers of the tame bears in Yellowstone Park and plays with them as if they were kittens. On the other hand, a man, *not* a hunter (no efficient habits of dealing with bears), walking through a deep forest, suddenly spies a huge slaving grizzly loping toward him. His first response is complete paralysis from a deadlock among the extremely violent conflicting inner impulses; they come too fast for him to think, and so they are not at once resolved. Soon some of these impulses, the strongest of them, begin to flow into action. He, still without reflection, starts for a tree to climb it—no good; the bear can climb. He starts to yell for help, to pray—the boys are three miles away, God still farther. He starts to run—stops, he trained for only one hundred yards in college. He must face the bear; he'll offer him the sandwich in his pocket—doubtful, it's made of bear steak. In all these actions we find as yet no reflection, no real thinking; the paralytic emo-

tional response has become chaotic. He acts first and thinks afterward.

He glances up and notices for the first time that the bear is not pursuing him. Perhaps he is safe after all. This is the first clear reasoning, and with it the chaotic emotional response drifts into a truly reflective, truly dramatic, situation which, whatever its outcome, will reveal character. Melodrama thus becomes drama. The man dodges behind a tree, recalls that he left his rifle on a log between him and the bear, reflects and acts, and in these acts, under these new conditions, we shall have the pattern of conduct which, more than any other, accounts for the great stories of the world. Please note that the interest here is, or would be, not so much in the man-and-bear picture as in the run-or-not-run picture and the outcome. It is not true that the man has only one desire, to escape the bear; it is not true that the bear is no longer an obstacle if he remains a lap behind as the man runs. The bear doesn't have to have his arms about him to be in his way, and not until he is safe (not even then!) will he be free of an internal clash of desires.

These considerations enable us to set down, then, this general principle for attaining greater intensity in dramatic appeal in fiction: *Select or invent situations in which the impulses clashing within the actor are of maximum intensity, and let them have it out.*<sup>2</sup>

In Mark Twain's well-known words, "Bring on the old lady and let her howl." The finest analyses in the world of a man's feelings or his thoughts, or even his acts,

<sup>2</sup> If superficial, melodramatic appeal will satisfy us, we may be content to present mere violent, instinctive conflicts, in which the spectator's interest is in the action rather than in the characters. This is the "Western." Some readers fail to enjoy good fiction because they have not learned to appreciate the play of character traits on genuine dramatic action.



will, in themselves, unaided, give no trustworthy picture of his character. This has already been argued. A man begins to show his character, as already stated, when he does one thing, having a chance to do something else. We display our real selves by our decisions. Man is differentiated from brute animals chiefly by his gift of reflection and foresight. Apes have feelings, but between their feelings and actions there is little or no control. Man is a problem-solving animal, and he most reveals himself when he faces alternatives and resolves them *by thought and action*. Character novels are truly great when to accuracy of observation, sympathy in treatment, and eloquence of style are added situations in which the character, fully equipped with traits, is made to do his stuff, in the midst of perils from which he can escape only by thinking and acting.

In such scenes we find the true glory and unapproachable art of the novel. When Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* is caught by her husband, Captain Rawdon, in a rendezvous with Lord Steyne and the charming but slippery lady is trapped at last—what she does then, what her husband and her lover do, are precisely what they have been doing for a few hundred pages of fine print. Becky, faced with every conceivable inducement to mend her ways, chooses to remain charming and slippery.

In such climactic moments the truth about character is given maximum emphasis. An underlying logic again appears, but, unlike that in the uniquely characteristic act, it is now finally conclusive. The syllogism now becomes this: The best thing that could happen to Becky (in her climax) is for her to repent her ways and reform, and she knows it; the worst thing that could happen is

overwhelming disgrace, destitution, exile, perhaps death, and she knows this. The worst will happen if she continues with her selfish treacheries. She decides to continue the treacheries. Conclusion: the selfish treacheries are the strongest drives in her nature; the novel has completely established the control and combination of these traits. This is the really transcendent role of drama, and possibly no novel contains a more thoroughgoing demonstration of this role than this lengthy work by the great Victorian satirist.

An examination of the high dramatic moments in novels enshrined on library shelves for the elements described in this discussion will richly repay the student. He might begin with one of the simpler stories whose issues are obvious and not stories whose issues are obvious and not "psychologized." *The Virginian* by Owen Wister will serve very well. In the duel between the hero and Trampas, the villain, you will find clearly marked external and internal conflicts. The main trait is the Virginian's devotion to honor which requires that he refuse Trampas' demand that he leave town before sunset. The first inner clash is between his determination to fight and his desire to prevent Molly's learning of his risking his life. Someone tells Molly, and another obstacle is found for his main trait (honor), i.e., Molly's pleading with him not to fight. She returns his ring, and he goes forth to meet his enemy. Calmly, masterfully, the Virginian now, saddened, without inner conflict—a false (but marvelous) touch—gets his man. The shooting itself is omitted, as if the author understood that it had no value in character revelation. "A wind seemed to blow his sleeve off his arm, and he replied to it, and saw Trampas pitch for-

ward." In this way the author tells us Trampas shot first, penetrating the Virginian's sleeve, and the latter replied, killing the assailant (in self-defense).

If the student should chance to pick up *Tobacco Road*, he may at first be puzzled. This novel seems to have characters without traits! All acts seem to be on an instinctive level, animal urges unmodified by education or conditioning. The sardonic humor of the book results from the incongruity between the reader's imagined actions in parallel situations and those of the Lester family. The latter have absolutely nothing to recommend them except their honesty! And honesty is something; it accounts for whatever sympathy the reader feels for the Tobacco Road people. The portrayal of life unburdened with conventions or morals has always been an effective device for escape.

*Tobacco Road*, nevertheless, has characters with traits and has genuine, although feeble, dramatic action. Jeeter's strongest trait is really a habit of wanting to plow the land when spring comes. His postponing everything else as long as

possible is temperamental. His putting his hat on the first thing in the morning and taking it off the last thing at night is a tendency reaction. The characters of Dude, the son, and Bessie, his *femme fatale*, are made-to-order subjects for the character student's laboratory; what they say they want, they really want, and no fooling around with tricks of the subconscious—they haven't any!

The principles governing the intensification of character by dramatic means can now be stated: *To increase character appeal, set the actor down in thinking-and-acting situations which heighten the intensity of the conflicting impulses. To attain maximum character appeal, a proof of character, oppose the main trait or traits with the strongest conceivable alternatives (of life-and-death seriousness if possible) and sustain the force of the traits, be the outcome what it may.*

These principles have their practical value to the novelist. All good novelists by the soundness of their work prove that they observe these principles whether they could write an article about it, as I have, or not. And as between theory and practice, the latter has it always.

## THE INTERPRETATION OF "LIGEIA"

ROY P. BASLER<sup>1</sup>

Although a number of biographers, psychoanalytical and otherwise, have employed the data and theories of several schools of thought in nonrational psychology in attempting to interpret the personality of Poe, and have indicated the need for such an approach in the interpretation of much of his writing, no

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one, as far as I am aware, has undertaken to point out the specific bearing of non-rational psychology on the critical interpretation of a number of Poe's stories which in their entire context seem to indicate that Poe dealt deliberately with the psychological themes of obsession and madness. Such a story is "Ligeia," the most important of a group of stories,



generally but inadequately classified as "impressionistic," which includes the kindred pieces "Morella" and "Berenice." Each of these three tales shows a similar preoccupation with the *idée fixe* or obsession in an extreme form of monomania which seems intended by Poe to be the psychological key to its plot. Even a casual comparison of these stories will reveal not merely the similar theme of obsession but also the dominant concepts which provide the motivation in all three: the power of the psychical over the physical and the power of frustrated love to create an erotic symbolism and mythology in compensation for sensual disappointment. Although Poe grinds them differently in each story, they are the same grist to his mill.

In the interpretation of "Ligeia" particularly, an understanding of the nonrational makes necessary an almost complete reversal of certain critical opinions and explanations which assume that the story is a tale of the supernatural. Clayton Hamilton's analysis of "Ligeia" in his *Manual of the Art of Fiction* (1918) is a rationalization which outdoes Poe's rationalization of "The Raven" in its attempt to show how Poe chose with mathematical accuracy just the effect and just the word which would make the perfect story of the supernatural. Unfortunately, Hamilton's basic assumptions seem obviously erroneous when he takes for granted that Ligeia is the main character, that the action of the story is concerned primarily with her struggle to overcome death, that the hero (the narrator) is "an ordinary character" who functions merely as an "eyewitness" and as a "standard by which the unusual capabilities of the central figure may be measured," and that Ligeia is "a woman of superhuman will, and her husband, a man of ordinary powers." These assump-

tions ignore the obvious context with its emphasis on the hero's obsession, madness, and hallucination. Actually, the story seems both aesthetically and psychologically more intelligible as a tale, not of supernatural, but rather of entirely natural, though highly phrenetic, psychological phenomena.

Perhaps the naïveté and excesses of certain psychoanalytical studies of Poe have militated against the recognition of the value of nonrational psychology in the study of Poe. At any rate, scholarly critical biographers have hesitated to credit the indubitable data of the science; and a recent critical study, A. H. Quinn's *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (1941), following the traditional interpretation, ignores the most obvious evidence of the nonrational theme and motivation of "Ligeia" and undertakes to analyze the story again as a tale of the supernatural. Quinn's apparent contempt for psychoanalysis and psychiatry in general, as they are applied to Poe himself, has, it seems, blinded him to the psychological patterns in "Morella" and "Berenice" as well as in "Ligeia." Although we need not consider here either the value of nonrational psychology as a means of understanding Poe's personality or the mistakes of broad assumption and overconfidence which the analysts of Poe have made, it must be recognized that, if nonrational psychology provides a better means of understanding the structure and effect of a tale like "Ligeia" and enables the reader to appreciate better what Poe accomplished as an artist, then the critic who refuses to accept nonrational psychology does so at the risk of his entire critical principle.

Let us examine the personality of the hero of "Ligeia," the narrator whose psycho-emotional experience weaves the

plot. He is presented in the first paragraph as a man with an erotic obsession of long standing; his wife is presumably dead, but his idolatrous devotion to her has kept her physical beauty and her personality painfully alive in his every thought. That this devotion approaches monomania becomes more clear with every statement he makes about her. She is the acme of womanly beauty and spiritual perfection. From the time of his first acquaintance with her he has been oblivious of all but her beauty and her power over him: "I cannot, for my soul, remember how, when, or precisely where, I first became acquainted with the Lady Ligeia." Furthermore, there is his interesting admission that "I have *never known* the paternal name of her who was my friend and my betrothed, and who became the partner of my studies, and finally the wife of my bosom." In view of the fact that she was of an exceedingly ancient family and had brought him wealth "very far more, than ordinarily falls to the lot of mortals," these admissions are more than strange. Though the hero half recognizes the incongruity of his unbelievable ignorance, he dismisses it as evidence of a lover's devotion—a "wildly romantic offering on the shrine of a most passionate devotion."

Beginning with the second paragraph, we see more clearly the degree of his obsession. Although he makes much of the power of Ligeia's intellect, his imaginative preoccupation with her physical beauty is highly sensuous, even voluptuous, in its intensity. He seems to be a psychopath who has failed to find the last, final meaning of life in the coils of Ligeia's raven hair, her ivory skin, her "jetty lashes of great length," and, above all, in her eyes, "those shiny, those divine orbs!" But his imaginative desire has outrun his capabilities. Though his

senses have never revealed the final meaning of the mystery which has enthralled him, his imagination refuses to accept defeat. The key to his failure is hinted in the paragraph which reveals his symbolic deification of Ligeia as a sort of personal Venus Aphrodite who personifies the dynamic urge of life itself but who, because of the hero's psychic incapacity, cannot reveal to him the "forbidden knowledge":

There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of the mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact—never, I believe, noticed in the schools—that, in our endeavors to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember. And thus how frequently, in my intense scrutiny of Ligeia's eyes, have I felt approaching the full knowledge of their expression—felt it approaching—yet not quite be mine—and so at length entirely depart! And (strange, oh strangest mystery of all!) I found, in the commonest objects of the universe, a circle of analogies to that expression, I mean to say that, subsequently to the period when Ligeia's beauty passed into my spirit, there dwelling as in a shrine, I derived, from many experiences in the material world, a sentiment such as I felt always aroused within me by her large and luminous orbs. Yet not the more could I define that sentiment, or analyze, or even steadily view it. I recognized it, let me repeat, sometimes in the survey of a rapidly growing vine—in the contemplation of a moth, a butterfly, a chrysalis, a stream of running water. I have felt it in the ocean; in the falling of a meteor. I have felt it in the glances of unusually aged people. And there are one or two stars in heaven—one especially, a star of the sixth magnitude, double and changeable, to be found near the large star in Lyra) in a telescopic scrutiny of which I have been made aware of the feeling. I have been filled with it by certain sounds from stringed instruments, and not unfrequently by passages from books. Among innumerable other instances, I well remember something in a volume of Joseph Glanville, which (perhaps merely from its quaintness—who shall say?) never failed to inspire me with the sentiment;—"And the will therein lieth,

which dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doth not yield him to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will."

In this passage it is not difficult to perceive the oblique confession of inadequacy and to trace the psychological process of symbolism, which compensates for the failure of sense by apotheosis of the object of desire. Although sensuous delight leads the hero to "the very verge" of a "wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden," final knowledge of the secret of Ligeia's eyes is blocked by an obstacle deep within the hero's own psyche, and the insatiable imagination seeks for a realm of experience not sensual and mortal and identifies Ligeia with the dynamic power and mystery of the entire universe. She becomes not merely a woman but a goddess, through the worship of whom he "feels" that he may "pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden." There is for him, however, no possibility of fathoming the mystery which she symbolizes, though in the height of passionate adoration he feels himself to be "*upon the very verge*," which experience he likens to that of almost but not quite recalling something from the depths of his unconscious.

This analogy of the will's inability to dictate to the unconscious and its inability to dictate to love reveals something more than the hero's vague awareness of a psychic flaw which thwarts his desire; it reveals the source of the obsession which dominates in a compensatory process his struggle to achieve by power of mind what he cannot achieve through love. The passage from Glanville is the key, the psychic formula, which he hopes may open to him the

very mystery of being, his own as well as Ligeia's, in which as he conceives lies the source of the dark failure and frustration of his senses. From this psychic formula derives, then, the megalomania that he can by power of will become god-like, blending his spirit with the universal spirit of deity symbolized in the divine Ligeia, who possesses in apotheosis all the attributes of his own wish, extended in a symbolic ideal beyond the touch of mortality and raised to the absoluteness of deity—intensity in thought, passion, and sensibility; perfection in wisdom, beauty, and power of mind. It is worth noting that Poe had earlier used the name Ligeia in *Al Aaraaf* for a divinity representing much the same dynamic beauty in all nature.

But the hero's approach to power is thwarted by Ligeia's death. Just at the point when triumph seems imminent, when he feels "that delicious vista by slow degrees expanding before me, down whose long, gorgeous, and all untrodden path, I might at length pass onward to the goal of a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!"—just then Ligeia dies, because of the weakness of her own mortal will and in spite of the fervor with which the hero himself "struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael."

At this point it may be noted that the obsession with the *idée fixe* expressed in the passage from Glanville begins with the hero himself and does not express Ligeia's belief. It is his will to conquer death that motivates the rest of the story, and not hers. Even when she recites the formula on her deathbed, the lines are but the echo of his wish, given in antiphonal response to the materialistic creed which she has avowed in her poem "The Conqueror Worm," which represents her philosophy and is read by



the hero merely at her peremptory request. This fact is always overlooked in the rational interpretations of the story, which assume that Ligeia's struggle is the primary motivating action of the tale. Thus, in spite of her power and beauty and her passionate desire for life, "*but for life*," the earthly body of Ligeia dies—perhaps, as the obsessed hero conceives, because she has not believed in her power to conquer death. Her failure of spirit, however, is not the end. Nor is the hero's failure as he "struggled desperately in spirit with the grim Azrael" the end, but rather the beginning of the grim mania in which he is resolved to bring her back to life.

In following all that the hero says, the reader must keep constantly in mind that, if the hero is suffering from obsession, his narrative cannot be accepted merely at its face value as authentic of all the facts; and he must remember that incidents and circumstances have a primary significance in terms of the hero's mania which is often at variance with the significance which the hero believes and means to convey. This is to say that Poe's psychological effect in "Ligeia" is similar to that of later delvers in psychological complexity like Henry James, whose stories told by a narrator move on two planes. There is the story which the narrator means to tell, and there is the story which he tells without meaning to, as he unconsciously reveals himself.

Hence, the important elements in the hero's description of Ligeia are of primary significance as they reveal his feeling of psychic inadequacy, his voluptuous imagination, and his megalomania and fierce obsession with the idea that by power of will man may thwart death through spiritual love. Likewise, the narrative of the circumstances of Ligeia's

death is of significance, not merely as it reveals her love of life and her struggle to live, but as it reveals the psychological crisis in which the hero's psychic shock and frustration bring on final and complete mania, the diagnostic fallacy of which is that his will is omnipotent and can bring Ligeia back to life. Up to the point of her death the hero's obsession has taken the form of adoration and worship of her person in an erotomania primarily sensual (though frustrated by a psychic flaw which he is aware of but does not understand) and hence projected into a symbolic realm of deity and forbidden wisdom. Following her death, however, his obsession becomes an intense megalomania motivated by his will to restore her to life in another body through a process of metempsychosis.

It is of particular importance that, with the beginning of the second half of the story, the reader keep in mind these two planes of meaning, for the primary significance of what the hero tells in this part is never in any circumstance the plain truth. It is rather an entirely, and obviously, fantastic representation of the facts, which justifies his obsessed psyche and proves that he has been right and Ligeia (and perhaps the gentle reader) wrong in the assumption that mortality is the common human fate—the old story of the madman who knows that he is right and the rest of the world wrong.

Thus even the hero's admission of his "incipient madness" must be recognized as the cunning condescension of the megalomaniac to the normal mind, which would not otherwise understand the excesses of his peculiar "childlike perversity" in choosing such macabre furnishings for his bridal chamber or in debauching his senses with opium—both of which "perversities" he dismisses with



pseudo-naïveté as minor "absurdities." The contempt which he feels for people of normal mentality almost leads him to give himself away in his blistering question: "Where were the souls of the haughty family of the bride, when, through thirst of gold, they permitted to pass the threshold of an apartment so bedecked, a maiden and a daughter so beloved?" In other words, why could not the parents of Rowena perceive in the macabre furnishings—the "ebony couch" with draperies of gold "spotted all over, at regular intervals, with arabesque figures . . . of the most jetty black," the "sarcophagus of black granite," and the "endless succession of the ghastly forms which belong to the superstition of the Norman, or arise in the guilty slumbers of the monk"—why could they not perceive the obvious death chamber which he intended the bridal room to be? Likewise, one must recognize the maniacal condescension which prompts the hardly disarming naïveté with which he confesses the pleasure he derived from Rowena's dread avoidance of him in the "unhallowed hours of the first month of our marriage" and with which he testifies, "I loathed her with a hatred belonging more to demon than to man."

Perhaps he relies on this imperciency of the normal mind to befuddle also the moral equilibrium of his audience into a sentimental acceptance of the phrenetic devotion of his spirit to the memory of Ligeia, which in his madness justifies, of course, his ghastly treatment of Rowena in terms of a pure, ethereal love for Ligeia. Thus he concludes his introductory statement in the second half of the story on a plane which, while utterly sincere in its obsessional idealism, is highly equivocal in its moral and psychological implications and reveals the fact

that underlying his mad persecution of Rowena lies his frustrate desire for and worship of the lost Ligeia:

My memory flew back (oh, with what intensity of regret!) to Ligeia, the beloved, the august, the beautiful, the entombed. I revelled in recollections of her purity, of her wisdom, of her lofty, her ethereal nature, of her passionate, her idolatrous love. Now, then, did my spirit fully and freely burn with more than all the fires of her own. In the excitement of my opium dreams (for I was habitually fettered in the shackles of the drug) I would call aloud upon her name, during the silence of the night, or among the sheltered recesses of the glens by day, as if, through the wild eagerness, the solemn passion, the consuming ardor of my longing for the departed, I could restore her to the pathway she had abandoned—ah, *could* it be forever?—upon the earth.

Up to this point in the second half of the story, the hero has unintentionally mixed a generous amount of obliquely truthful interpretation with the facts of his story; but from this point to the end he narrates events with a pseudo-objectivity that wholly, though not necessarily intentionally, falsifies their significance. He tells what he saw and heard and felt, but these things must be understood as the hallucinations of his mania, as wish-projections which arise from his obsession with the idea of resurrecting Ligeia in the body of Rowena. He tells the effects but ignores or misrepresents the causes: he wants his audience to believe that the power of Ligeia's will effected her resurrection in the body of Rowena but does not want his audience to recognize (what he himself would not) that he was the actual agent of Rowena's death and his perceptions mere hallucinations produced by obsessional desire.

In brief, it must be recognized that the hero has murdered Rowena in his maniacal attempt to restore Ligeia to life. Although his narrative of the "sudden illness" which seized Rowena "about the

second month of the marriage" avoids anything which suggests a physical attempt at murder, there are unintentional confessions of deliberate psychological cruelty in the macabre furnishings of the apartment and in the weird sounds and movements designed to produce ghostly effects. The hero mentions with apparent casualness and objectivity that, "in her perturbed state of half-slumber, she spoke of sounds, and of motions, in and about the chamber of the turret, which I concluded had no origin save in the distemper of her fancy, or perhaps in the phantasmagoric influences of the chamber itself." But by his earlier confession he had calculated these "sounds" and "motions" in advance, as instruments of mental torture for the young bride, by so arranging the figured draperies as to produce optical illusions of motion and by introducing "a strong current of wind behind the draperies." He further confesses that as her dread and fear began to produce symptoms of hysteria and physical collapse he "wished to show her (what, let me confess it, I could not *all* believe) that those almost inarticulate breathings, and those gentle variations of the figures upon the wall, were but the natural effects of the customary rushing of the wind." But he did not tell her!

At this point he narrates how he became aware of a "presence" in the chamber, a supernatural agency at work. This is the wish-illusion that not he but the ghost of Ligeia, vampire-like, is preying upon the distraught and febrile body of Rowena. The details of resuscitation and relapse he wishes to believe evidence of the struggle of Ligeia's spirit to drive Rowena's spirit out of the body and to reanimate it herself. Hence arises the hallucination of the shadow on the carpet—"a faint, indefinite shadow of

angelic aspect—such as might be fancied for the shadow of a shade." But, as he admits immediately, he had indulged in "an immoderate dose of opium, and heeded these things but little, nor spoke of them to Rowena." Such deprecation of his own perception is again the cunning of the maniac who must tell his story and must equally not tell it wholly, lest he spoil it by supplying evidence of a sort likely to encourage suspicion that there is something more than opiumism in his madness.

Then comes the crux of the death scene. Here, in the *mélange* of fact and hallucination, is *the fact* which betrays him: "I saw, or may have dreamed that I saw, fall within the goblet, as if from some invisible spring in the atmosphere of the room, three or four large drops of a brilliant and ruby colored fluid." Impatient for results and fearful that the apparent progress of Rowena's hysteria and physical collapse will not suffice, doubting the power of his will alone to effect his purpose, he has resorted to actual poison, which, however, his obsession adapts into the pattern of hallucination by perceiving that it is distilled from the atmosphere rather than dropped from a bottle held in his own hand. He cannot in his obsession recognize the bottle or the poison as physical facts, for then the power of the spirit must bow to the greater power of a merely physical drug.

The deed is accomplished, and the remainder of the narrative reveals the final stage of his mania. As the body of Rowena writhes in the throes of death, his wish takes complete command of his brain. As he watches, his mind is filled with "a thousand memories of Ligeia." The shadow on the carpet disappears, and he hears "a sob, low, gentle, but very distinct," which he

"felt . . . came from the bed of ebony." As evidence of returning life appears in the corpse, he feels it necessary that "some immediate exertions be made; yet the turret was altogether apart from the portion of the abbey tenanted by the servants—there were none within call—I had no means of summoning them to my aid without leaving the room for many minutes—and this I could not venture to do." With this obviously satisfactory explanation made, he relates how he struggled alone to call back "the spirit still hovering," only to fall back with a shudder and resume his "passionate waking visions of Ligeia."

Again and again the symptoms of life appear and diminish, and each time the hero testifies that he "sunk into visions of Ligeia," with the result that each period of struggle "was succeeded by I know not what of wild change in the personal appearance of the corpse," until finally his obsessed brain and senses perceive their desire-wish accomplished. The phrenetic tension of hallucination mounts in the concluding paragraph to an orgasm of psychopathic horror and wish-fulfilment in the final sentence: "'Here, then, at least,' I shrieked aloud, 'can I never—can I never be mistaken—these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes—of my lost love—of the lady—of the Lady Ligeia!'"

This conclusion is artistically perfect and unassailable if the story is understood to be that of a megalomaniac, a revelation of obsessional psychology and mania. If, however, the story is taken to be a rational narrative of the quasi-supernatural told by a man in his right mind, the conclusion is not a conclusion but a climax, the proper denouement of which would be the corpse's reassumption of Rowena's lineaments and its final lapse into certain death, recognized

this time as complete and final by the mind of the hero. Philip Pendleton Cooke, presuming the entirely rational interpretation to be the one Poe intended, called Poe's attention to this supposed weakness of the ending in a letter otherwise filled with large praise for the story's effect. Cooke's comment is as follows:

There I was shocked by a violation of the ghostly proprieties—so to speak—and wondered how the Lady Ligeia—a wandering essence—could, in quickening *the body of the Lady Rowena* (such is the idea) become suddenly the visible, bodily Ligeia.

Poe's answer takes full cognizance of the justice of Cooke's criticism and tacitly admits the rational interpretation to be the one he intended, making the somewhat lame excuse that

it was necessary, since "*Morella*" was written, to modify "*Ligeia*." I was forced to be content with a sudden half-consciousness, on the part of the narrator, that Ligeia stood before him. One point I have not fully carried out—I should have intimated that the *will* did not perfect its intention—there should have been a relapse—a final one—and Ligeia (who had only succeeded in so much as to convey an idea of the truth to the narrator) should be at length entombed as Rowena—the bodily alterations having gradually faded away.

It is possible that Poe meant in this statement merely to bow to Cooke's praise and accept a criticism which completely misses the primary significance of the entire story, in order to avoid the necessity of explaining to an admirer the painful truth that he had missed the point. Poe was avid for the praise that came all too seldom, and he may have avoided controversy with his appreciative correspondent somewhat out of gratitude. That he could not have held seriously or for long the opinion that the story needed an added denouement seems obvious from the fact that, al-



though he made careful and detailed revisions of the story afterward, he did not alter the nature of the conclusion. That he would have done so without hesitation had he actually believed the conclusion defective, we may be sure from his indefatigable practice of revising his favorite pieces even in the minor details which did not fulfil his wishes.

There seem to be two alternatives here: either Poe meant the story to be read as Cooke read it, and failed to provide the sort of conclusion which he admitted to be necessary, or he meant it to be read approximately as we have analyzed it, and merely bowed to Cooke's criticism out of gratitude for appreciation. Possibly there is a third alternative, however, one which is not incompatible with Poe's genius. Perhaps the intention in the story was not entirely clear and rationalized in his own mind, preoccupied as he was with the very ideas and obsessions which motivate the hero of the story. Anyone who has studied Poe's rationalization of "The Raven" must recognize that in its *post hoc* reasoning Poe entirely ignores the obvious psycho-emotional motivation of his own creative process. In his offhand and casual comments on his writings, however, he sometimes recognizes the essentially "unconscious" source of his compositions. An example of this recognition is his comment written in a copy of the *Broadway Journal* which he sent to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman:

The poem ["To Helen"—of 1848] which I sent you contained all the events of a *dream* which occurred to me soon after I knew you. Ligeia was also suggested by a *dream*—observe the *eyes* in both tale and poem.

Thus, in this third alternative we may perceive the possibility that as an artist Poe produced in "Ligeia" a story which faithfully depicts the functioning of both

rational and nonrational processes in a mind obsessed by a psychopathic desire that becomes the diagnostic of a megalomania in which power of will (wish) is conceived as overcoming the physical fact of death and the grave, but that Poe was not entirely clear in his own mind concerning the nonrational logic of the unconscious which he used as an artist in depicting his hero as conceived in a dream and, hence, accepted Cooke's criticism as justified, even though in his own feeling he recognized the "truth" and appropriateness of the conclusion as he had written it, in part, at least, out of his own unconscious. Poe's penciled comment on the manuscript copy of one of his later poems, as quoted by Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, is similarly indicative of the source of his artistic certainty:

"All that I have here expressed was actually present to me. Remember the mental condition which gave rise to 'Ligeia'—recall the passage of which I spoke, and observe the coincidence. . . . I regard these visions," he says, "even as they arise, with an awe which in some measure moderates or tranquillizes the ecstasy—I so regard them through a conviction that this ecstasy, in itself, is of a character supernal to the human nature—is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world."

Thus, when he came to revise the story, his artistic sense, rooted deeply in his own unconscious processes (or, if one chooses, in "the spirit's outer world"), did not permit the alteration of the conclusion to fit an interpretation essentially superficial and incomplete in its perception of the psychological origin of the story. Had Poe understood as much of the nonrational processes of the psyche as does even the layman of today, he might have written as a critic a reply to Cooke that would have outdone "The Philosophy of Composition" in logical analysis of the creation of a work of art



out of both rational and nonrational mental processes, but it is not likely that he could have written as an artist a more effective psychological story than "Ligeia."

The merits of this analysis must, of course, stand or be dismissed on the evidence in the context of the story itself, and the evidence in this case is—what it is not in the case of Poe's personality—complete. The hero of the story either is or is not to be completely trusted as a rational narrator whose account can be accepted with the meaning which he wishes it to have, and Poe either does or does not give the reader to understand which point of view he must take. To me,

at least, Poe makes obvious the fact of the hero's original obsession in the first half of the story and his megalomania in the second half. The concluding paragraph remains aesthetically as utterly incomprehensible to me as it was to Philip Pendleton Cooke, if the story is merely a story of the supernatural designed to produce an impression. And I cannot think that Poe, fully aware of the justice of Cooke's criticism in that view, would have left the denouement as it was originally written without believing that there was more artistic verisimilitude in the story as he had created it than there was in the story as Cooke had interpreted it.

## THE ESSENCE OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

LEO<sup>1</sup> AND MIRIAM GURKO

The work of F. Scott Fitzgerald reveals with extraordinary sharpness the essential differences between the major writer and the minor writer. He will no doubt be remembered in the years to come as the chronicler of the jazz age, the amanuensis of the flapper and her boy friends, the psychiatrist of the unhappy persons who populate his more famous novels as they were affected by the cynical effluvium backwashed by the first World War. Today, in the year 1944, nothing seems deader or more dated. The jazz age, the flapper and her circle, the sensual anarchism of the early 1920's, appear to us to be so many exhibits in a sociological waxworks, so many well-illuminated signposts of an irretrievable past. They have seemed so for a long time now, long antedating our participation in the second World War, the

very frenzy and autointoxication of their existence being immutable guaranties of their transience. Of this period Fitzgerald was the fictional embalmer.

It is a curious and significant phenomenon of literary history that the minor writer is always associated with his period, the major writer with himself. Shakespeare is himself first, an Elizabethan playwright second and not a very close second. But Lodge, Nash, Kyd, Greene, Webster, are Elizabethan dramatists first and practically always. Their time has swallowed them as it has not Shakespeare. The same thing is largely true of Fitzgerald and the more formidable writers of his day. One associates the author of *This Side of Paradise* with a certain group of frustrate, upper-stratum romanticists of a particular few years in American life. But one associates Sinclair Lewis, say, with mate-

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rialism in all its vast and complicated phases, not materialism locked in the third decade of our century. Thus *Main Street* reminded Stuart P. Sherman of Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, and the French bourgeoisie; Fitzgerald reminds his readers of no one but himself. From another approach, Fitzgerald, in the psychological sense, is a kind of lesser Hemingway, but his disillusionment stands in the same relation to Hemingway's as a glass of water to a shot of gin. Compared with Dos Passos, who sought to corral all of American civilization, Fitzgerald illustrates the Browning theory of goals: Dos Passos tried for much and failed, Fitzgerald tried for relatively little and succeeded. Yet no one would place the two men on the same creative level. Lewis, Hemingway, and Dos Passos, the major novelists of the 1920's, reveal to a greater or lesser degree signs of breaking out of the time limits of their age, limits within which Fitzgerald curls and snuggles in supercomfort.

The minor writer is differentiated, too, by the depth and variousness with which he explores the field of human nature in which he has chosen to operate. The minor writer tends to contract toward some single personality or psychological point; the great writer tends to expand and overflow into many. Fielding and Richardson, the earliest modern novelists in the language, illustrate these tendencies sharply. Richardson is at home only with women, and succeeds in projecting only the Clarissa Harlowe kind of woman at that; whereas Fielding moves freely in the company of both sexes, as his Squire Western, Mrs. Honor, Thwackum, Square and company, abundantly testify. For this reason as much as for any other, Richardson's literary dimensions run to smallness, Fielding's to size.

The heroes of Fitzgerald's five novels

(the last unfinished) are variations upon a single person with a set of moods and attitudes that changes little from book to book. In physical aspect they are agreeable; they have enough money to bar from the scene the intrusion of economic issues. They are all in virtually the same state of emotional unease, rooted in their creator's belief that happiness is a romantic sensation felt in extreme youth, a sensation that comes to a rapid bloom and vanishes early and forever. Because of this belief, Amory Blaine is a sad young man who wanders from one affair to another, each decreasingly satisfactory; Anthony Patch has a few early weeks of happiness with his beautiful young wife and then sinks gradually into wretchedness; Jay Gatsby spends almost the whole of his short life searching for a sublimated love which, when found, crumbles in his hand; Dick Diver slowly disintegrates under the pressure of a complicated marriage; even Monroe Stahr, the oldest in point of years and the most involved of Fitzgerald's heroes, is engaged in a peculiarly nervous and unstable profession, seeking restlessly for a love to compensate him for the loss of a dead wife. The five are under the spur of the same emotional impulses; their situations change, but their basic reactions do not; the disintegrating elements within them are largely identical. They are the same human being at five different stages. Fitzgerald distributes their ages with an odd factual continuity, and they advance in years as the novels do. Amory, the youngest, appears in the first novel; Patch, the second youngest, in the second. And so through Gatsby (1926) in his upper twenties and Diver (*Tender Is the Night*, 1934) in his thirties and Stahr (*The Last Tycoon*, 1941) in his early forties. Is this merely coincidental? Perhaps; but it provides us with an in-

trinsic clue to the direction in which Fitzgerald's mind was moving.

The minor writer not only is dated historically and is monolithic in his psychological interests; he is also likely to be circumscribed in his philosophical ideas. The range and sympathetic embrace of our opinions of the world demarcate our stature as human beings and are reliable guides to what is loosely referred to as "nobility of mind." In the breadth of these Fitzgerald is like most of us: his ideas are few, and he clings to them with much feeling. Broadly speaking, he subscribes to the camp of the futilitarians, but his subscription is so sweetly and gently held, with so many romantic niceties and nuances, that he is in no sense to be grouped with the ordinary camp followers. With one brief exception, the comment running through his novels and short stories is that people are almost predestined to unhappiness and that there exists between their hopes and illusions and the realization of them a bridgeless gulf. How peculiarly related this theory is to its social context, the context of a generation that passed through World War I with illusions of eternal peace and perpetual democracy, then lived through its bruising aftermath, is plain enough. Fitzgerald embroiders the theory with decorations of his own. Though life in general is futile, it has moments of fruition; and though these moments are of brief duration, they are nonetheless savory and even ecstatic. So taken was Fitzgerald at one time with this belief that he broke away from the theory as a whole and left Amory Blaine, the first of his heroes, panting with optimism at the end of *This Side of Paradise* over the nebulous prospect of the future. But this was fated to be a momentary interregnum that never reappeared.

Yet, though the theory as a whole and

even its buoyant and romantic corollary are familiar, the accent and tone with which Fitzgerald clothes them are less so. To describe this accent as sweet, delicate, semi-rhapsodic, a kind of Robert Herrickism in prose, is not wholly to do it justice. It partakes of a certain fragile fiber, a certain veiled, at times slightly exotic enchantment, a netted quality, that distinguish Fitzgerald's style and technical resources. Sometimes in *The Great Gatsby*, often in *The Beautiful and Damned*, nearly always in *Tender Is the Night*, we feel that we have drifted very far away from reality and have existed on another plane, in which everything is perfectly lucid but, as it were, of another substance different from our own.

What, then, ultimately differentiates Fitzgerald among the novelists of his time is his paradoxical clothing of a hard, ironical pessimism in a style that is soft and woven with a gossamer tracery. Yet, for all the peculiar excellence of the style, the range of his ideas remains hemmed in by the singular negativism of his view of the world and the dogged, unvaried way in which this is repeated from story to story—which further tends to pin Fitzgerald in the ranks of the minor writers.

These tendencies toward a minor literary classification are counterweighted by movements in the opposite direction, plain enough in Fitzgerald as they are in every writer and every human being. There is in him a steady progression, if not psychological or philosophical, at least in technical competence and resourcefulness. Though he studies ultimately the same human being, he studies him more intensively and maturely from book to book. Blaine, Patch, and Gatsby are adolescents in sequential stages, but Diver is a full-blown adult equipped with a brainful of subtleties and facets, and



Stahr is almost unique among Fitzgerald's heroes in that he has not only a complete set of romantic sensations but energy and drive as well. Edmund Wilson has observed relevantly that Stahr is the only man Fitzgerald has studied against the background of a profession. This is not wholly true, since Diver was a psychiatrist and certain aspects of psychiatry as a profession were insinuated into his story. But, where Fitzgerald was experimenting with a new conception of plot in *Tender Is the Night*, that new conception has solidified into a conscious exploitation of new materials in *The Last Tycoon*. The profession of making motion pictures is treated with a robustness and a sense of ramification that reduce the earlier attempt to an amateur status. One brilliant chapter in particular exposes Stahr handling with scorching rapidity script-writers, directors, coproducers, actresses, stagehands, and executives, and so exposes with breathtaking and organic clarity the whole cross-structure of picture-making. Before this, Fitzgerald never attempted anything half so difficult and never succeeded in welding a full-grown adult into a full-grown, man-sized adult world. His technique during his last years did develop with sudden, forward-looking momentum. As much for this as for anything else, it is to be presumed, many of his posthumous critics incline to the belief that had he lived he would have developed into a major writer.

An over-all view suggests further signs of the incipient complexity and burgeoning of his themes. His career almost exactly spans the frenetic interlude between two world wars, dominated as it was in the United States by the fantastic period of the boom and the equally fantastic depression. His early novels and

short stories provide us with what are in some ways the purest human distillations of the first event, the young puffed by vain dreams and punctured by the ultimate realization of their vainness. Having exhausted himself in this effort, he went into hibernation for nearly fifteen years and, except for the psychiatric side-eddy of *Tender Is the Night*, wrote nothing sustained. The conviction grew during this time that he had had his say and would speak no more, that his talent had consumed itself. But with *The Last Tycoon* Fitzgerald passed through a spasmodic rebirth, this time threatening to capture certain fundamental aspects of the depression just as, almost a generation before, he had seized a primary emotional aspect of the boom. However unfinished the novel, it begins to grapple with the tremendous question of capital and labor, to trace the great ramifications of a major corporative industry, and to use them as frames and props for the story. These phenomena, impressed into service as stage machinery, were nonexistent in Fitzgerald's work twenty years before, because they had not then acquired the personalized intensity in American life that they accumulated during the 1930's. That Fitzgerald was growing aware of them during his long period of silence, studying them, absorbing them into his fictional schemes, is now strikingly apparent. Death overtook him before he succeeded. But not before he broke enough new ground to foment the speculative suspicion that he was in the process of bursting the ingrown time limits that his first books had fastened upon him.

In these many ways he is a fascinating literary personality—in creative achievement small, in historical significance great, in developing potentiality boundless. Although, taken as a whole, his nov-



els and expressed ideas fit him into the shallow and visible confines of the authentic minor talent, one senses within him the seeds of greatness which, as with most of us, would have required only the proper combination of time and social

climate to be brought to full harvest. That this harvest was denied him seems the irrevocably ironic frustration in the career of a man whose reputation will, as a consequence, rest upon his several studies of irony and frustration.

## MILTON'S THEORY OF EDUCATION

TYRUS HILLWAY<sup>1</sup>

A theory of education presumably consists in a consideration of all the objectives which the teacher aims to achieve by his teaching. Examined from this viewpoint, Milton's *Tractate on Education* cannot be called an exposition of his educational theory but rather a discussion of his teaching methods. Two very familiar but somewhat broad statements regarding the purposes of education are contained in it, of course; and these have been thought of commonly but incorrectly as embracing the whole of his educational theory.

It will be the aim of this paper to point out another work of Milton which more nearly describes the objectives of Milton's teaching and which until now has not been mentioned in connection with the *Tractate*. This work is the *De doctrina Christiana*, of which the second book deals very specifically with educational ideals. In order to justify what perhaps at first thought amounts to audacity in identifying this essentially religious work with education, it will be necessary both to show the inadequacy of the *Tractate* as a presentation of Milton's educational theory and to compare the *De doctrina* with a familiar modern statement of the purposes of education.

The *Tractate* contains a much-quoted

sentence outlining in general terms the nature of Milton's aims for education: "I call therefore a compleat and generous Education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and publick of Peace and War."<sup>2</sup> Few, indeed, will challenge the fitness and excellence of that statement. Its fault, however, lies in its excessively broad scope. Precisely what, after all, are "the offices both private and publick of Peace and War?"

The *Tractate* contains also a less familiar but more characteristic description of Milton's pedagogical objectives: "The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the neerest by possessing our souls of true vertue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."<sup>3</sup> Obviously, there are elements of parallelism between the foregoing sentence and those lines in *Paradise Lost* which reveal the major purpose of that poem:

That to the highth of this great Argument  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the wayes of God to men.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *The Works of John Milton*, ed. F. A. Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), IV, 280.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 277.

<sup>4</sup> I, 24-26.

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Professor Bundy long ago suggested that "in *Paradise Lost* the poet is interested in the problem of education."<sup>5</sup> But Bundy believed that the two statements from the *Tractate* are fundamentally opposite in character.<sup>6</sup> The former, he thought, emphasizes the potential goodness of man's nature; while the latter points to the human soul's inherent sinfulness. Though such a distinction may be convenient in order to show the relationship of one statement to the pedagogical attitude of Raphael and of the other to the pedagogical attitude of Michael, it is difficult from an objective point of view to see any logical incompatibility between them. Milton might very well have combined the two sentences into something of this kind: *In order to fit a man for the performance justly, skilfully, and magnanimously of all the offices both private and public of peace and war, education must help him to repair the ruins of our first parents by teaching him to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.*

It is to the *De doctrina*, however, that one must look for an explanation in specific terms of the offices, or virtues, of the properly educated man. Here, in considerable detail, Milton discusses the objectives toward which a Christian life must aspire. These, one may infer without any bold stretching of the imagination, must necessarily be also the objectives toward which, in Milton's thinking, the ideal Christian education should aspire.

The second book of the *De doctrina*

<sup>5</sup> Murray W. Bundy, "Milton's View of Education in *Paradise Lost*," *JEGP*, XXI (1922), 127.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-29.

treats of the good works through which the worship of God may be accomplished. "Verus Dei cultus in studio bonorum operum praeipue positus est."<sup>7</sup> The first book, it will be remembered, largely deals with Christian faith. Milton divides the potential good works of man into two classes: first, the general virtues or duties and, second, the particular virtues or duties.

The general virtues are five: wisdom (that is, the discovery and application of God's will in all human actions) and prudence (discretion or practical wisdom), both of which arise from or belong to man's understanding; and sincerity (or integrity), promptitude (that is, the maintenance of a ready and willing spirit), and constancy (perseverance in a right course of action), which all arise from or belong to the will.

The particular virtues consist in duties toward God and in duties toward mankind. The duties toward God are internal and external worship. The duties toward man are divided between what a man owes to himself and what he owes to his neighbor. An attitude of love and good will toward all mankind and the habit of righteous living make up the general duties which man owes to himself. Particular duties which a man owes to himself include moderation in eating and drinking, in sex, in language and behavior, and in dress; contentment with his lot, expressed by frugality, industry, and a liberal spirit; a regard for his own dignity; and fortitude and patience to resist or endure evil. The duties which man owes to his neighbor are charity, love, innocence of any voluntary injury, respect for the modesty of others, respect for a neighbor's good name, tact, veracity, open dealing, the faithful perform-

<sup>7</sup> The *Columbia Milton*, XVII, 2. This text is followed throughout for the *De doctrina*.

ance of promises, the keeping of secrets, dignified conduct, courtesy, refinement of conversation, respect for the property of others, and the willingness to assist a neighbor in distress. Finally, there are numerous duties of a special nature which involve the relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and the like; as well as almsgiving, hospitality, and the relations between the people and their political and religious officials. These, it seems virtually certain, are the Christian attributes to which Milton refers as "the offices both private and publick of Peace and War."<sup>8</sup>

To identify these "offices" further as educational aims, one may set beside them a typical modern statement regarding the chief purposes of education. Such a statement is found in a report published by the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association of the United States.<sup>9</sup> This publication lists major aims under four headings: the objectives of self-realization, of human relationship, of economic efficiency, and of civic responsibility.<sup>10</sup> The objectives of self-realization consist in the inquiring mind, clear speech, efficient reading, effective writing, counting and calculating, listening and observing, personal and public health knowledge, good health habits, interest in recreation, intellectual interests, appreciation of beauty, and character.<sup>11</sup> The objectives of human relationship are respect for humanity, enjoyment of friendships, co-

operation, courtesy, appreciation and conservation of the home, skill in home-making, and democratic family relationships.<sup>12</sup> The objectives of economic efficiency comprise good workmanship, accurate occupational information, right occupational choice, occupational adjustment and improvement, knowledge of personal economics, consumer judgment, efficiency in buying, and consumer protection.<sup>13</sup> The objectives of civic responsibility comprehend social justice, community improvement, social understanding, defense against propaganda, conservation of national resources, application of science for the general welfare, world citizenship, respect for law, economic literacy, acceptance of civic duties, and loyalty to democratic ideals.<sup>14</sup> It seems clear that, in spite of the differences in language and viewpoint, Milton and the compilers of the above list of educational aims are both attempting to describe the activities and attitudes toward which good education must proceed.

For Milton the teacher, academic scholarship is of considerably less worth to man than moral character and religious feeling. Raphael's words to Adam in *Paradise Lost* reflect this view:

Sollicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,  
Leave them to God above. . . .

be lowlie wise:

Think onely what concerns thee and thy being;  
Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures  
there  
Live, in what state, condition or degree.<sup>15</sup>

For, says Raphael,

Knowledge is as food, and needs no less  
Her Temperance over Appetite, to know  
In measure what the mind may well contain,

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, Milton indicates more than once in the *Tractate* that moral and religious aims are of greater importance in education than those of a purely scholastic nature. For examples cf. the following from the *Columbia Milton*, Vol. IV: 275, ll. 2-5; 276-77, ll. 26-27; 277, ll. 14-23; 279, ll. 16-20; 281, l. 22; 282, ll. 1-4; 284, ll. 17-20.

<sup>9</sup> *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy* (Washington, 1938).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-71.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-89.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-23.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-106.

<sup>15</sup> VIII, 167-76.

Oppresses else with Surfet, and soon turns  
Wisdom to Folly, as Nourishment to Winde.<sup>16</sup>

Instead, mankind must learn

the way that might direct  
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set  
From center to circumference, whereon  
In contemplation of created things  
By steps we may ascend to God.<sup>17</sup>

Milton recommends the selection of textbooks and the use of lectures before

<sup>16</sup> VII, 126-30.

<sup>17</sup> V, 508-12.

the students which will "lead and draw them in willing obedience, enflam'd with the study of Learning, and the admiration of Vertue."<sup>18</sup> Not wide and brilliant scholarship but firm and careful nurture in Christian morality based upon an understanding of man's duties toward God, himself, and his neighbors must be the school's aim for every pupil, Milton teaches.

<sup>18</sup> The Columbia Milton, IV, 282 (from the *Tractate*).

## THE ENGLISH PROFESSOR'S DILEMMA

WALLACE C. BROWN<sup>1</sup>

The anomaly of a literary figure whose work is tacitly assumed to be inferior to his historical reputation raises serious doubts about our critical procedures in American universities. Poe as a poet is such a figure, and there are many others. The English professor's preoccupation with social, political, and biographical aspects of his subject rather than with its value *as literature* has exposed him to the charge of functioning as an adjunct of the history department. It is at this point that some of our best critics today have taken up arms—men like Professors John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren in one group; Professors Ronald S. Crane, Norman F. Maclean, and Elder Olson in another; and even Mr. I. A. Richards and Mr. T. S. Eliot have tackled the problem, the latter going so far as to question whether English literature can be profitably taught to undergraduates at all. Whatever else they may not have in common, critics like these agree that the English departments of American

universities emphasize "historical" at the expense of "literary" criticism.

An acquaintance of mine once said that, although he could readily establish the importance of Poe in the history of American poetry, he always had a hard time showing that Poe was a good poet. Strange predicament: Poe a great poetic figure but a dubious poet! And in my own experience this dilemma often occurs with English poets from Dryden to Wordsworth. We can resolve this problem, it seems to me, in only one of two ways. We may assume that an important poetic figure need not be an important poet. This position would allow us to leave poets like Gray, Collins, Poe, Longfellow, and others in the histories of literature and go on ignoring their poetry *as poetry*. Or we can maintain that, if such poets are important at all, their importance must lie primarily in their poetry, and then proceed to examine it for proof of this assumption. It is the latter position that I wish to maintain in this paper.

Two of the best-known anthology

<sup>1</sup> The University of Kansas City.



pieces in American literature are Poe's "Annabel Lee" and his first poem "To Helen." The historical facts about them are similar. They were both given their final form in the 1840's; both were addressed to actual women; both are lyrics of "romantic escape"; and both illustrate Poe's definition (or indefinable) of poetry as "the rhythmical creation of beauty." Thus, on purely historical grounds it would be hard to say which of the two is the better poem, and anthologists who judge mainly on these grounds would be right in including both of them indiscriminately.

But to judge in this manner is not enough, particularly if the selected poems are to be interpreted to students. The next step, the vital step, must be taken; that is to analyze the poem for its own sake and then present it as an artistic synthesis: a "vision at a particular moment of experience." The term "vision" need not be difficult if we remember that one of its primary meanings is "to see" and if we recall Sir Bors's answer to the request that he describe the Holy Grail:

Ask me not, for I may not speak of it:  
I saw it.

In broadest terms "Annabel Lee" is a poem about the triumph of love over death. The poet uses a combination of narrative and lyric, with the narrative dominant at the beginning and the lyric at the end. That is, the poet has a simple story to tell (the once-upon-a-time-there-was-a-maiden formula) and a set of personal responses (chiefly emotional) to that story. In the first of the six stanzas the lover says that long ago by the ocean Annabel Lee lived, "with no other thought / Than to love and be loved by me." In the second stanza he adds that they were both children, that

their love was unique, and that the angels envied them. The next two stanzas tell us that this angelic envy caused the death of Annabel Lee; the fifth asserts the triumph of their love over everything; and the last describes lyrically the lover's response to Annabel's death.

So much for what the poem says. Now we must raise the more vital and difficult question—what the poem is; for, paradoxical as it may seem, a poem always *is* more than it *says*. Determining what a poem is will reveal its essential poetry, which, in the final synthesis, will include what it says. In a sense, the point I am making here is related to the old form-versus-content idea, although I should like to keep that two-valued critical shibboleth out of the picture. Probably Mr. Ransom's far more acute distinction between "logical structure" and "local texture" in poetry is more relevant.<sup>2</sup> And possibly all that I mean is included in Mr. Kenneth Burke's idea of the "strategy" of the poet in a given poem. At any rate, we have the question: What is "Annabel Lee" as poetry?

First, the poem should have a self-contained unity, in which its parts and their relationships can be established. It is this unity that gives a poem its unique individuality, making it unlike anything else in the world. "Annabel Lee" is not accurately divisible into parts whose relationships are firmly established within the poem. This lack of clean-cut divisions is indicated, on the most obvious level, by the fact that the structural variations of the six stanzas are arbitrary, almost accidental. Why, for example, should the first two stanzas have six lines, the third eight, the fourth six, the fifth seven, and the sixth eight? Further-

<sup>2</sup> *The Intent of the Critic* (Princeton, N.J., 1941), pp. 110-11.

more, the only possible division into parts on the basis of thought and kinds of poetry is haphazard and uncertain.

Thus "Annabel Lee" may be roughly divided into two parts at the end of the fourth stanza. In the first part the lover tells a story that ends with the death of the girl; in the second he describes their love and his response to her death. In the first four stanzas a series of things happen; then, in the fifth, occurs a sharp change in the direction of the thought, indicated syntactically by the conjunction "but" and meaning, as the lover says: Although Annabel Lee has been taken from me by death, the greatness of our love will surmount even this seemingly final separation; hence nothing "Can ever dissever my soul from the soul / Of the beautiful Annabel Lee." The last stanza, opening with "for" (i.e., "because"), gives the lover's reasons for this unity of their souls: "For the moon never beams . . .," etc. And the poem ends with "And so" (i.e. "therefore") always at night I lie down with her "In her tomb by the sounding sea."

The most serious structural weakness of "Annabel Lee" appears in the haphazard arrangement of ideas within the two parts. To be effective, even the simplest lyric must make clear within itself just why everything is where it is—so clear that any transposition of words or lines will immediately change the total effect, usually for the worse. But in "Annabel Lee" we could interchange the third and fourth stanzas, both of which describe the girl's death, without seriously altering the development of the thought or the total effect of the poem. In fact, such a change would make less arbitrary the varying lengths of the stanzas, giving the poem three six-line stanzas, an eight, a seven, and another eight. Also in the last stanza there is no structural reason why

the first four lines should not be transposed to read as follows:

For the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee,  
And the moon never beams without bringing me  
dreams  
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee. . . .

When such wholesale changes can be made in a poem without affecting its inner unity, that unity must be weak and haphazard.

Not only the arrangement of ideas but often the expression of them is weak and ineffective. In the second stanza, for example, we are told that the lovers "loved with a love that was more than love." This statement is so vague and woolly as to be almost jargon. It is an inexact way of saying "With a love that the winged seraphs in heaven / Coveted her and me," which follows in the next two lines. Furthermore, a number of statements appear in "Annabel Lee" which refer to circumstances outside the poem. When such references are so private or otherwise unidentifiable that their meaning is lost, this kind of obscurity constitutes another weakness. In the first stanza the lover tells us that "a maiden there lived *whom you may know* / By the name of Annabel Lee." Why, from the viewpoint of the reader, should he know this? In the fourth stanza the same veiled reference appears: "Yes, that was the reason (*as all men know . . .*)."

In any case, these obscure references are irrelevant and may be gratuitous padding. And who, we may finally ask, are Annabel Lee's "highborn kinsmen," who took her away from her lover and put her in a sepulcher?

This kind of analysis, of course, runs counter to the treatment of Poe's poems by his usual admirers and to Poe's own ideas about poetry. Poe repeatedly asserted the superiority of the indefinite

over the definite image, the indefinite over the definite emotion; hence he is often praised for the creation of mood or atmosphere in his poems. "Annabel Lee" is such a poem. In it the devices of rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and repetition combine to create a dominant mood.

But I believe there are two reasons why this mood, this atmosphere, is not successful. The first has to do with the nature of "music" in poetry. Briefly, music in poetry is not a matter of the sound of words and word combinations alone. It is a far more complex matter of the sound in relationship to certain areas of meaning. Mr. Eliot has discussed this subject recently:

My purpose here is to insist that a "musical poem" is a poem which has a musical pattern of sound and a musical pattern of secondary meanings of the words which compose it, and that these two patterns are indissoluble and one. And if you object that it is only the pure sound, apart from the sense, to which the adjective "musical" can be rightly applied, I can only reaffirm my previous assertion that the sound of a poem is as much an abstraction from the poem as is the sense.<sup>3</sup>

In "Annabel Lee" the words have very little of this "secondary meaning." They make a series of outright, if indefinite, statements on the primary or denotative level of meaning. Contrary to the usual assumption, Poe is not always the poet of rich connotation. To be clearly and powerfully suggestive, secondary meanings require a stronger bond with their sources than that of free association. There is a difference between vagueness and intentional ambiguity; and often when Poe does suggest, he suggests too much, as Mr. Eliot has said about Swinburne. The almost meaningless phrases and obscure references in "Annabel Lee"

are a case in point. If, then, there is little genuine connotation in this poem, its music must be largely sound effects rather than that indissoluble pattern of sound *and* meaning.

The second reason for considering the mood of "Annabel Lee" unsuccessful is that there is simply too much of it unrelieved. What might be called the law of diminishing returns is violated, with the result that the dominant rhythm (anapaestic) becomes monotonous and the sounds almost stupefying to the sensitive reader. Related to the excessive hothouse atmosphere of the poem is the fact that it takes itself too seriously. The lover's attitude is so deadly-in-earnest that it risks arousing in the reader the opposite response—that of humor—which would be fatal to the poem. This situation exists because "Annabel Lee" is based on too narrow an interpretation of a human experience: so much of that experience is excluded, including the possibility of humor, that the reader himself is tempted to supply it ironically.

If, from this discussion, we conclude, as I think we must, that "Annabel Lee" is not a good poem, we may reasonably ask: Is this poem representative of Poe's best? Anticipating the answer to this question, we may note that, in two recent anthologies<sup>4</sup> based on the critical principles of this paper, Poe's "Annabel Lee" is not included, but "To Helen" is.

Compared to "Annabel Lee," "To Helen" is a slight poem (fifteen lines to forty-one)—so slight, in fact, that we may reproduce it here as an aid to our discussion.

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
Like those Nicaean barks of yore,

<sup>3</sup> *Partisan Review*, November-December, 1942, p. 459.

<sup>4</sup> *Understanding Poetry*, ed. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren; and *Reading Poems*, ed. Wright Thomas and Stuart Gerry Brown.



That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore  
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
To the glory that was Greece,  
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lol in yon brilliant window-niche  
How statue-like I see thee stand,  
The agate lamp within thy hand!  
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
Are Holy-Land!

What the poem says may be quickly stated. To the poet, Helen's beauty is like certain ancient ships that carried a "weary, wayworn wanderer" home; second, the details of her beauty have brought the poet home to the full significance of classical civilization; and, finally, he sees her statue-like, personifying that civilization and seeming also to have come from "regions which / Are Holy-Land."

What this poem is, is a much more complex matter. As we proceed, it will be seen that the difference between what "To Helen" says and what the poem is, is far greater than the same difference in "Annabel Lee." And, of course, the greater this difference, the larger the area of essential poetry in any poem.

As a self-contained unity, "To Helen" is divided into three parts, based primarily upon the threefold stanzaic division. In addition, the syntax closely parallels the three parts: one sentence to the first stanza, one to the second, and one and an exclamation to the third. Furthermore, the stanzas have an equal number of lines each, with the rhyme scheme and the length of lines interestingly varied. Thus, in structure the parts are tightly knit.

Within each part, or stanza, the thought also is closely woven. The first stanza is an elaborate simile, in which

Helen's beauty is compared to the "Nicaean barks" that carried Ulysses home. In the phrases "Nicaean barks" and "the weary, wayworn wanderer" (who, it seems to me, can be no one but Ulysses), we have the early appearance of a classical motif that dominates the whole poem. The importance of this classical motif is powerfully driven home by the space given to it and by the development of the music of the stanza. In terms of the simile, Helen's beauty receives one line; the thing compared to it, four. This thought relationship is reinforced by the contrast between the short vowels and quick syllables of the first line and the long, slow movement of the remaining four. The slow movement reaches a kind of climax in the fourth line, where the effect of the alliteration and the long vowels is miraculous. The magic of this music is comparable to the best elsewhere in English—Macbeth's lines, for example:

No, this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

Or the opening of Crashaw's "Hymn to Saint Teresa":

Love, thou art absolute sole lord  
Of life and death. . . .

The second stanza introduces a change in the thought, which is, however, tightly related to the preceding idea. Helen's beauty is now analyzed into three of its aspects: "Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face, / Thy Naiad airs"; and these become the power which brings the poet himself home "To the glory that was Greece, / And the grandeur that was Rome." The poet in the second stanza is like Ulysses in the first: each is a "weary, wayworn wanderer" who has been "On desperate seas long wont to roam"; and just as Ulysses was finally rescued by the



Nicaean boats, so the poet has at last been saved by means of Helen's beauty. We have, then, a larger implied simile between the first and second stanzas, within which the expressed simile in the first stanza operates. And the stanzas are knit together by the idea of Helen's beauty and the Ulysses-poet relationship. Also, a contrast exists between these stanzas. The Ulysses picture is a literal physical homecoming, whereas the poet's homecoming is figurative—wholly in the realm of the imagination.

The third stanza is climactic, incorporating the first two and welding the entire poem into an organic unity. The poet now sees Helen standing statue-like in a "brilliant window-niche," "The agate lamp within thy hand." Here, on one level of meaning, she is clearly the symbol of Ulysses' "own native shore" and of "the glory that was Greece, / And the grandeur that was Rome"—the figurative home of the poet. That is, she is the classical motif personified—a concentration of the complex meanings of the whole poem. On a more literal level of meaning Helen becomes simply a classical statue; and the beauty of the statue parallels the classical beauty of the real Helen, which is described in the second stanza.

The last two lines remain to be considered. Superficially, they might seem less closely integrated than any other part of the poem. The key words are, of course, "Psyche" and "Holy-Land." In context, "Psyche" illustrates Poe's effective use of intentional ambiguity, for the word functions on at least three levels of meaning. On the first level "Psyche" is simply the mythological Greek princess loved by Cupid; hence her identification with Helen as the symbol of classical civilization. On the second level "Psyche" stands for the

mind, suggesting the "seeing," the comprehension, of the poem through the imagination. On the third level "Psyche" is the soul; and on this level the full meaning of the last two lines becomes clear, for the soul appropriately derives from "regions which / Are Holy-Land." In terms of the whole poem this religious idea provides an unexpected dramatic shock, not unlike the kind characteristic of metaphysical poetry. Also "Holy-Land" suggests the contrast between pagan and Christian civilization, although for Poe a more likely reading would be that classical culture has become his religion.

Finally, the entire poem is saved by its objectivity from being a mere romantic wish-fulfilment. Like Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," this poem is a projection of the poet's thought and emotion outward to Ulysses, to the details of Helen's beauty, and to the statuesque Helen herself, so that they become the "objective-correlatives" appropriate to the inner attitude of the poet.

As in "Annabel Lee," the dominant mood in "To Helen" is characteristic of Poe. But in this poem the mood is masterfully subtle, controlled, and varied; and, even more important, it communicates rich connotations of meaning as well as sound and movement. We have seen how this occurs in the first stanza, where the music of the simile contributes its own pattern of secondary meanings. The last two lines of the second stanza also reveal how the mood and meaning work together. These lines originally read:

To the beauty of fair Greece,  
And the grandeur of old Rome.

It is not merely the fact that we are used to the famous lines as they now stand that makes them seem just right and superior to the above version. A brief analysis of the rhythm and sound geared

to the meaning will show their superiority. In the above version each line has three stresses, two of which fall on the last two words: "fair Greece" and "old Rome." This gives less emphasis to the key words, "Greece" and "Rome," because they have to divide their strategic position with the stressed adjectives which precede them. Consequently, the fulness, the inclusiveness, of their meaning is reduced. Furthermore, the meaning of the adjectives themselves is not parallel in the sense called for by their structural position; whereas "glory" and "grandeur" in the final version are parallel in this sense. Also, in this version the alliterative sound of "glory," "Greece," and "grandeur" knits the two lines together more firmly than do "Greece" and "grandeur" in the earlier version.

The most striking characteristic of the music of the last stanza is the exclamatory tone that prevails throughout it. This tone, of course, suggests a climax and thus becomes a part of the meaning of the stanza, which, as we have seen, is climactic. But the exclamatory tone is hard to manage, for it tends to become a rhetorical crutch on which a feeble set of meanings limp to their conclusion. It seems to me that the last exclamation in the stanza ("Ah, Psyche, from the

regions which / Are Holy-Land!") is, in this sense, too rhetorical and a blemish.

Despite this weakness, however, the entire poem as poetry, as a vision at a particular moment of experience, attains a high level of excellence. As we have seen by analysis, it has an organic unity in which the music and thought patterns are almost perfectly adjusted to the structure of its parts. Viewed in this light, "To Helen" is surely one of the great lyrics in English.

Yet, more often than not, students in literature are directed to spend no more time on "To Helen" than on "Annabel Lee," because both poems appear in the anthologies and are equally important historically. This situation raises the question of the professor's dilemma. One way to resolve it has been the subject of this paper. Such critical interpretation of the works of many of our poets whose reputations are secure but whose poems tend to be ignored would, I believe, put them back into circulation. As it is, these poems have become little more than museum pieces or documents for the case histories of their authors. To make them live again as poetry would produce a more balanced and healthy state of literary studies, by which literature in college could more legitimately justify its existence.

## TESTING THE PRECISE USE OF WORDS

HAROLD B. DUNKEL<sup>1</sup>

The close and very significant relation between a student's knowledge of vocabulary and his ability to read (and hence his likelihood of succeeding in college) has long been recognized. As a result, teachers of English at all educational levels have sought to improve their students' command of words, and tests of vocabulary have had a prominent place in many tests of scholastic aptitude and achievement.

Almost without exception, however, the tests have measured *range* of vocabulary; and much of the teaching, too, has been devoted to increasing the total number of words which the student knows. In objective tests of this sort a single, rather infrequent word is presented, followed by from three to five other isolated words. From this group the student is to select the one approximate synonym of the word tested. For example, the student is confronted with *laconic* and is asked whether it is closest in meaning to *concise*, *perfunctory*, *slow*, *stilled*, or *tearful*. Thus, while the words tested are relatively uncommon, the student needs only a very general idea of their meaning to be able to select the correct answer.

Like everyone else, we of the Board of Examinations of the University of Chicago have always used tests of this sort and

have found the results useful. As the student begins the study of the disciplines of higher education, often one of his greatest stumbling-blocks is the extensive specialized terminology of the various fields. Yet a number of us, especially those of us interested in the study of reading, felt that ability to use with precision such vocabulary as the student already possessed might possibly be an equally important factor in his ability to read, to write, and to succeed in college generally.

The usual form of vocabulary test obviously did not, however, lend itself to the measurement of precision in the use of words. Since in that form both the word tested and the five possible answers are all isolated from any context, the differences between the possible answers must be kept rather gross if the keying of an item is to be unambiguous.

To overcome this difficulty we put both the word tested and the five possible answers into contexts. In this form all the words involved have their particular meanings definitely limited by contexts, and, with complete fairness to the student, very sharp distinctions can be drawn between meanings. No longer is there the very dubious assumption of a "core-meaning" or "sphere of meanings" for an isolated word, and no longer is the definition of the dictionary the sole arbiter of limitation or extent of meaning.

A test of this sort was prepared and was incorporated in the three competitive examinations for scholarships to the University of Chicago, awarded to stu-

<sup>1</sup> Member of the Board of Examinations, University of Chicago.

The author is under obligation to all his colleagues of the Board of Examinations of the University of Chicago for help with this test, but particularly to Lawrence A. Andrus, who assisted in its preparation, and to Benjamin S. Bloom, who made available the statistical data.

dents completing the tenth, twelfth, and fourteenth grades.<sup>2</sup> The identical test was also made part of the battery used in Freshman Week at the University in the autumn of 1942. The findings reported here are based on these four uses of the test.

The directions for the test were as follows:

In the following passage a number of words are underlined. Beneath the passage these words are repeated, and each is followed by five sentences in which a word or phrase is underlined. After reading the passage and the sentences, carefully select for each item that sentence in which the underlined word or phrase is used in a meaning which is most similar to that of the word underlined in the passage.

I reproduce here only a fragment of the passage<sup>3</sup> and seven items which bear on it:

The growth of confidence in the precious metals and in coins, until the assurance became practically universal that *good* money could be trusted to have its purchasing *power* anywhere, must have been a gradual one. . . . And being fairly *established*, this assurance was subjected to very considerable *strains*. . . . Every *age* produced a *number* of clever people intelligent enough to realize the opportunities for *smart* operations afforded by the complex of faiths and fictions upon which the money system rested.

84. *good*

- A. This is a *good* day for golf.
- B. I had a *good* dinner.

<sup>2</sup> These examinations are entitled, respectively: "Four-Year College Scholarship Examination, 1942"; "High School Scholarship Examination, 1942"; and "Junior College Scholarship Examination, 1942." Copies of these examinations may be obtained through the University of Chicago Bookstore.

<sup>3</sup> The passage chosen was taken from H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (New York: Macmillan Co. 1921), II, 343-44, and was used by the permission of its author. This material was chosen because it contained words suitable for our purpose, was written in an easy style, and treated a topic likely to be interesting to the groups of students tested.

- C. He comes from a *good* family.
- D. He was a *good* man.
- E. His word is as *good* as his bond.

85. *power*

- A. The strikers shut off the *power*.
- B. He belongs to the party in *power*.
- C. Fear deprived him of the *power* to act.
- D. The United States is a great *power*.
- E. The square is the second *power* of a number.

86. *established*

- A. By trumping he *established* the clubs.
- B. America does not have an *established* church.
- C. The penalty is *established* by law.
- D. The firm was *established* in 1602.
- E. His reputation as an orator is well *established*.

87. *strains*

- A. Violin strings break under the *strain*.
- B. Fishermen's stories put a *strain* on our credulity.
- C. The piano-mover suffered a *strain* in his back.
- D. He spoke in a noble *strain*.
- E. Botanists cross plants of different *strains*.

88. *age*

- A. The reign of Cronos was the Golden *Age*.
- B. Her *age* is greater than mine.
- C. He has not yet come of *age*.
- D. Infirmary is one of the afflictions of *age*.
- E. I haven't seen you for an *age*.

89. *number*

- A. Ten is a *number*.
- B. The classes varied in *number*.
- C. Dual refers to *number*, as do singular and plural.
- D. A *number* were killed.
- E. The story is in the current *number* of *Harper's*.

90. *smart*

- A. He was a *competent* businessman.
- B. He was an *intelligent* student.
- C. He was a *sharp* bargainer.
- D. She wore a *chic* hat.
- E. He made a *witty* remark.

This sample will illustrate the two sorts of item used. In the one type the



identical word tested is also used in the possible answers; in the other variety "synonyms" of the word tested appear in the possible answers.

Since we wished to determine whether this ability to use words precisely increases with further education and hence planned to use the same test with students ranging from the tenth to the fourteenth grades, the test had to be sufficiently easy to allow students in the tenth grade to show their varying abilities and yet be difficult enough to measure accurately the capabilities of students in the fourteenth grade also. Despite the simplicity of some items included for this reason, low scores were common in all groups. The results indicate that the discriminations between meanings required are not too easy even for students completing junior college. In fact, the results show clearly that it is little wonder that students (and all of us) come to grief with *liberty*, *duty*, *democracy*, *free enterprise*, and the like; students have semantic difficulties on a much lower level. It is quite possible that college students need more elementary training in making distinctions between the meanings of very simple words, and that our teaching has begun with too complicated materials.

From the results obtained, several conclusions can be drawn about this ability to use words precisely. In the first place the correlations between this test and the older type of vocabulary test (which also formed part of the battery in each administration) ranged from .46 to .56. While the size of these correlations shows that there is, as was to be expected, a positive relation between the two sorts of command of words measured by these tests, the correlations are sufficiently low to indicate that the new test is measuring an ability different from that measured by the old one. The new test is not just the

same old test of range now garbed in fancy dress. In other words, the student who possesses the ability to use these rather common words precisely is not always the same student who possesses a large vocabulary, and vice versa.

The connection with general linguistic ability may be further seen in the correlation of this new test with the linguistic ("L") scores of the ACE Psychological Examination.<sup>6</sup> Comparative scores on the psychological examination were available for two groups—for students taking the scholarship examination in the tenth grade and for the freshmen of the University. These coefficients of .47 and .54, respectively, very similar to those between the new test of vocabulary and the old, indicate again the positive relation between this ability to make fairly fine discriminations among the meanings of words (as measured by this test) and general verbal ability (as defined by the content of the psychological examination).

A second important finding is that the mean scores for the groups increase significantly as we ascend the educational ladder by these two-year steps.<sup>5</sup> That is, further educational experience apparently gives students increased ability to make discriminations of this sort just as additional schooling usually increases the range of vocabulary. Since these students were drawn from a very wide sampling over the country, it is impossible to determine whether this increase in the mean is attributable to direct instruction in what might be called "elementary se-

<sup>6</sup> American Council on Education Psychological Examination for College Freshmen. The freshmen at the University were given the 1942 form; the contestants for the Four-Year College scholarship, the 1941 form.

<sup>5</sup> In statistical terms, for the three groups competing for scholarships, each difference between means exceeds three times the standard error of that difference.

mantics" or whether this increased ability is simply the indirect increment of more traditional instruction in English and foreign languages. Now that the general outline, at least, of a test to measure this ability is available, teachers can investigate the various methods of teaching this ability and have some hope of being able to evaluate results.

The third conclusion, and that which is probably most interesting to teachers of English, is that this ability to use words precisely is as closely related to the ability to read comprehendingly as is the command of a wide range of vocabulary. In the battery of tests used in Freshman Week, three reading tests developed by the Board are included.

The first of these is the "Test of Comprehension of Physical Science Materials." Since that instrument contains considerable material in tabular and graphic form, the correlation between it and the new test is only .27. One should note, however, that the test of range of

vocabulary has a correlation of about the same order, .23. In the reading of this type of material, then, neither sort of command of vocabulary is an important factor.

Turning to the other two reading tests, which contain purely verbal (as opposed to graphic) material, we find higher correlations. Thus the old test of range correlates .52 with the "Test of comprehension of Social Science Materials." For the new test, the correlation is similar, .49. Likewise, in regard to the examination testing "Comprehension of Literary Materials," the older test of range shows a coefficient of .52; the new test, one of .58.

In summary, we find that the kind of precision in the use of vocabulary tested by this instrument appears to be an ability different from that measured by a test of range, yet one which is, like other verbal abilities, associated with it and one which shows an equally important relation to the ability to read with comprehension.

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SPEECH AND ENGLISH FOR FRESHMEN

GEORGE V. BOHMAN<sup>1</sup>

How can the teaching of two fields of learning taught at the same level to the same students, as speaking and writing frequently are for college freshmen, be "co-ordinated"? The current military "English" courses whose outlines require the teaching of speaking and writing and their counterparts, listening and reading, concurrently in one rather brief course have intensified discussion of this problem and have led the Editor to request

me to present briefly a viewpoint which is held by some of us who are teachers of speech. My proposition is that "co-ordination" can become a dangerous siren word leading to inefficient and undesirable educational practices unless the conditions under which "co-ordination" is attempted are carefully analyzed.

What is implied in the "co-ordination" of learning in speech and English? It is clear to me that it means little else to large numbers of teachers of English

<sup>1</sup> Chairman, assistant professor of public speaking, Dartmouth College.

and to some in my field than a mechanical combination within one course with some magic title or as just "English" and with a single instructor for each section. Obviously, along with its essential function in the "humanities," each field recognizes a filial relationship to classical rhetoric. Yet, although elementary speech directly involves all the canons of rhetoric, writing and literary appreciation represent specializations of certain canons, and the teaching outlines of all three fields vary a great deal for what seem to be valid psychological and pedagogical reasons. Out of the realization of the special problems of teaching speech and the failure of many English staffs to provide time and expert instruction in speech came separate speech staffs in a majority of modern colleges.

Since that separation many English and speech teachers have essentially ignored each other officially. The latter have been keenly aware, however, of "a more or less dormant antipathy of many teachers of English and Departments of English toward Departments of Speech and the teaching of speech." Most of my colleagues in speech believe that the average English instructor is innocent of what goes on in a modern class in speech or thinks of speech in terms of an "elocution" course which he took or some unsatisfactory extra-curricular oration or debate which he heard. We believe that "co-ordination" as used by many English teachers means the "subordination" of speech training to writing or reading and sometimes the subordination of both speech and writing to reading for literary appreciation before students have attained a reasonable proficiency in speech and writing.

Unfortunately, the study of recent surveys yields ample evidence that subordination has occurred in a majority of

colleges in military English courses. With varying mechanical organizations, perhaps from 20 to 30 per cent of the colleges are teaching well-balanced courses, but from 20 to 25 per cent are disregarding one or more of the plainly stated aims: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Apparently, some are continuing the same old civilian course in English composition, emphasizing the same types of reading and writing and omitting direct training in speech. Some not only neglect practice in expository writing which men in the services need but seem to subordinate all writing to an extensive program of imaginative, aesthetic readings. In many other colleges it is clear that only halfhearted, fumbling, ineffective attempts are being made to teach the courses outlined. In these, small percentages of time in class or preparation are given to one or more major phases; the needs of particular students are not analyzed; the best-trained faculty members available are sometimes not used to teach or supervise work in the courses; few projects are devised to motivate the interest and industry of men keenly aware of their immediate military future; and the limited number of class hours is carelessly used.

To make clear how speaking and listening training is often ineffectively presented if it is not completely omitted, let me point out the two essential characteristics of modern speech courses: (1) direct, essentially exclusive attention of both instructors and students at specifically assigned periods to fundamental aspects of the speech of students and their understanding of the principles and methods of speech preparation and delivery and (2) direct attention, usually in combination with projects for speaking, to the ability of students to listen effectively and give evidence of the qual-

ity of listening through both oral and written repetitions, summaries, analyses, and critiques. Formal speaking experience with criticism ought to accomplish (1) reasonable orientation to speaking situations; (2) improvement in the variety and effectiveness of voice and action skills; (3) mastery of elementary techniques in the preparation of well-organized speeches; and (4) reasonable proficiency in the preparation and presentation of expository and such other types of speeches as the particular course outline directs.

Inevitably, many class hours are consumed in combining instruction in principles upon which effective speech is based with opportunities for speaking under supervision and criticism. Desirable training can be achieved, however:

- I. By allotting numerous class hours to specific instruction in speech.
  - A. In the civilian college four to six semester-hours of speech courses are needed to develop reasonable proficiency in the abilities needed by college freshmen.
  - B. If less time is available and especially if speech training is part of a broader course, as in V-12, E-1, and E-2, usable criteria might be:
    1. Provide each student as many opportunities to present formal speeches as he has to write formal themes. Note that the number of class hours needed will depend upon section size, length of speeches, and methods of criticism.
    2. Provide at least half as many class hours for the discussion of theory, quizzes, and playback of recordings.
    3. Provide additional time outside class hours for conferences and clinical work.
- II. By giving each student specific individual criticism of each speaking performance during the class hour at which he speaks:
  - A. By individual written criticism sheets.
  - B. By some discussion at the end of the hour, emphasizing at least the commoner faults and problems in the project.
  - C. By individual conferences.
  - D. By student listening to brief recorded speeches at least once a term.
- III. By providing a speech clinic for handicapped students.
- IV. By providing the most expert instruction that can be made available.
  - A. In civilian courses the minimum requirement ought to be that teachers specifically trained and experienced in speech as a modern academic field of study should teach all speech courses, or speech portions of courses regardless of the departmental label.
  - B. In colleges required to teach military courses containing speech instruction:
    1. First utilize the speech staff fully in these courses.
    2. Unless there is an abundance of such trained speech teachers, concentrate the time of those available on the speaking and listening phases of the courses.
    3. Even if the speech staff is still inadequate, utilize its time fully and make it responsible for supervising all speech training by whomever taught.

Almost all these characteristics and methods of speech instruction have been overlooked in constructing various military English courses. Notably, several English departments have counted as "speaking hours" every day that the class discussed a theme or a literary selection and every reading-aloud of a student theme. Speaking? Yes. Speaking instruction, with specific attention to and criticism of the speaking and reading? No! These are called "co-ordinated courses" and most often occur in colleges without competent speech staffs. The English staffs in such colleges are considered by my colleagues to be either unaware of or prejudiced against valid speech training.



Further, the time of speech staffs has been wastefully used or refused by directors of military English courses. In twenty of the two dozen V-12 colleges in the Northeastern States which I surveyed, thirteen had fairly competent speech staffs of varying size, probably the smallest percentage of competent staffs in any area except possibly the Southeast. In only five of the colleges was the time of speech staffs concentrated upon teaching speaking and listening in E-1. In these five colleges speaking and listening comprise one-fourth to one-third of the class hours, and time for writing and reading is likewise well balanced. In six colleges both English and speech instructors teach all phases of the course, in which from one-sixth to one-fourth of the course is devoted to speaking and listening. Members of one notable department of public speaking in this group who are probably much better qualified to teach writing and reading than the English staff is to teach speaking and listening have seriously questioned the wasteful use of their time. In two colleges the small speech staffs do not participate in teaching but conduct a speech clinic and advise English teachers upon the small number of projects for speaking and listening which are included in the course. The desire for "co-ordination" has frequently led to less expert instruction than could have been given and has often been associated with subordination of the time allotted to speech.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For data about these courses I have used questionnaires and miscellaneous information collected prior to and since the survey published as "Speaking Instruction in College Military Units: East," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XXIX (December, 1943), 400-406. Also see other surveys reported in the same issue and the survey in *College English*, January, 1944. Further articles will appear in the later issues of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. Some colleges have improved the speaking and listening phases of

If "co-ordination" sought by placing all phases of speaking, writing, listening, and reading training in one elementary course under one instructor leads so easily to unbalanced, generalized, and often poorly conducted training, what view ought we take toward the idea of "co-ordination" between the learning of English and speech?

First, I would suggest that sound learning of the abilities or ideas of two fields take priority over "co-ordination" of those abilities and ideas, even if the learning occurs in the same terms or years. The minimal essentials of learning, the integrity of the ideas and methods within each field, are much more important than whether we have molded some generalizations or half-learning from each into a sugar-coated pill. At my home in Illinois, folks called snow pellets "Doctor Shanks' pills" because there was about as much essential medicine inside the miniature snowball as in one of the old homeopath's cure-alls that were so easy to swallow and fooled some people into thinking that they were no longer sick. It is far more important that the student learn effective principles and habits of speaking and listening, learn to write clearly and interestingly, and learn to read speedily, accurately, and discriminatingly than that he receive a sugar-coated orientation of all these aspects of learning in courses that neglect specific training.

Second, I suggest, after the view expressed by Dean Roscoe Pound, that it is primarily the student, not the teacher, who makes essential co-ordinations. It may even be more useful for students to hear the philosophies of their special

their military courses since the original survey. Both speaking and reading phases, but not basic speech training, in A.S.T. courses will be affected by the directive of January, 1944.

fields in relation to learning generally from several teachers rather than one and more often through casual conferences than from the mechanisms of "co-ordinated" courses.

Third, useful and economical co-ordination between fields of learning can be formulated if committees which plan freshman courses consult together freely and regularly, analyze one another's plans, avoid unnecessary duplication, and utilize learning in one course as much as possible in others.

Finally, throughout the college, but especially in connection with elementary and basic courses, faculty members

ought to confer together informally much more often to keep themselves informed as to the aspects of speaking and writing, for example, in which students may be expected to show proficiency as the courses progress and in their own class they call attention freely to faults whose correction the student may be expected to achieve in other concurrent courses.

Perhaps this is as far as co-ordination can go, but such a program ought to equip and motivate the student to make the personal co-ordination for himself that will help fit him happily and usefully into society.

### THE IDEAL STUDENT

The Ideal Student, like the Ideal King,  
The Ideal Prof., or Ideal anything,  
Having no ground on which to plant his feet,  
Dwells in the skies, where all perfections meet.  
Can courage, wisdom, and integrity,  
Unselfishness, and zeal, and industry,  
In one lone mortal frame be found combined?  
Where is this paragon of humankind?  
No, let us look for what *this* world produces  
In men of flesh, with living human juices.  
Let's say "ideal" just for convenience,  
Though not "Ideal" in its Platonic sense.

Our ideal student's friendship is not feigned,  
Nor is this friendship by the prof. disdained;  
But in breaking the ice, the student should be  
bolder

Than his professor, for the prof. is older,  
And warier, too filled with written pages  
To bridge the gap of their unequal ages.  
Then why cannot the prof. look back, you  
wonder,  
And throw off all his dignity and thunder,  
Be young again, be carefree, wild, and gay?  
Ah, but the numbers do not run that way!  
To look back now might be to court disaster  
(Remember Mrs. Lot, the salt pilaster!).  
So our student reads ahead, from pure affection,  
And both turn pages in the same direction.

With due appreciation of the field,  
The track, the court, the gym, he will not yield  
To leathern spheres the sphere of education,  
Grasshopping life away in recreation.  
Yet he is not by marks to be beguiled,  
Those alphabetic toys that charm the child,  
And teachers are so careful in bestowing,  
He takes them in his stride and keeps on grow-  
ing.

Expressing his sincere appreciation  
Of prof.'s best efforts by co-operation,  
He will not "polish apples," will not praise  
The vaudevillean stunts of prof.'s off-days.  
He does not look on tact as insincerity,  
Mistake man-sized assignments for severity,  
Or try in vain to leap a generation  
By sipping nightly of sophistication.

Let youth be prized, in all its robust glee,  
Its pride, omniscience, and greenery:  
The Bird of Time, we know, is on the wing,  
And age will dry the ebullience of spring;  
But while the youthful frenzy is in flood,  
The lust for knowledge crying in the blood,  
Our ideal student feels the freshets rising,  
Channels them, and sails without capsizing.

LAWRENCE RICHARD HOLMES

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## CURRENT ENGLISH FORUM

CONDUCTED BY PORTER G. PERRIN, ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT, J. B. McMILLAN, AND  
JULIUS C. BERNSTEIN

*If you found the sentence "He planned on taking four courses in this term" in a college freshman theme, would you blue pencil it?*

H. M. S.

The answer to this question can hardly be a simple "yes" or "no." It depends on the level of usage appropriate to the theme in which the sentence occurs. *Webster's New International Dictionary* labels *plan on* "colloquial," which, of course, is not a derogatory label but an indication that the expression is appropriate to "informal speeches and writings." If the style required by the instructor (or chosen by the student) is generally dignified and formal, *planned on taking* should be changed to *planned to take*.

*In the sentence "While tobogganing down the mountain, he cleverly missed the tree," what is the function of "while"? Is the clause elliptical?*

W. R.

Curme (*Syntax*, pp. 284-85) says: "An *as*-clause and a *while*-clause can be abridged to the predicate appositive construction with the present participle as predicate appositive whenever its subject is identical with that of the principle proposition. . . ." He classifies *while* in such clauses as a conjunction introducing a clause of attendant circumstance with the old subject and verb abridged.

*According to a U.P. dispatch in the January 22, 1944, "New York Times," a writer in the magazine "Science" has objected to the use of "nouns modifying nouns." He supports his objection with the argument that "the language of science should be written not only*

*so that it can be understood, but so that it cannot be misunderstood." Is he right in assuming that the use of substantives as modifiers obscures meaning?*

G. P.

The examples cited in the dispatch you mention, such as "rudder control mechanism sequence," do not support the argument. It is utterly impossible to decide whether an expression taken out of context is or is not clearly understood by the readers for whom it was intended. Laymen tend to forget that the "understanding" is performed by *people*, not *words*, and that we must discover the intelligibility of an expression by finding out how its readers or hearers respond to it. Furthermore, the intelligibility of any expression is always a matter of degree; some people always understand words differently from the way others understand them.

As for the syntax involved, the writer was surely not objecting to the ancient English practice of converting words from nouns to adjectives. Literally hundreds of examples of such conversion are revealed in even the most abridged dictionaries. It must always be remembered that any word can be any part of speech if it is used as such. There is nothing about the sound, spelling, history, or meaning of any word that forbids its conversion or that defines its part-of-speech category. We decide on a word's part of speech by its use, its function in speech or writing.

The *Science* writer was more likely objecting to the practice of using a series of words, such as the example cited above. If so, his objection is basically a personal dislike of something which he does not do himself. Such subjective judgments are perfectly legitimate; they are of the same nature as

approval or dislike of lemon pie, formal receptions, or vermilion nail polish. All we need to remember is that a subjective judgment is binding on us only to the extent that we wish to be like the person who makes the judgment.

J. B. McM.

*In one "Current English Forum" you said that in such a sentence as "Gladys came tripping up the walk" the phrase "tripping up the walk" modifies "came." Isn't "tripping" a participle and therefore limited to modifying a noun or pronoun?*

ANON.

The word *tripping* is indeed a participle, but are participles limited to modifying nouns or pronouns? Examples of participles with adverbial use are *raving* mad and *boiling* hot. In the sentence cited, surely *tripping up the walk* is most simply analyzed as a description of the manner of Gladys' coming. If we take the most usual use of a part of speech and call it the *only* use, then we violate a truthful description of the language for the sake of an exceptionless rule. It is the philosophy of this "Forum" that truthful description of the language is the grammarian's obligation.

*In the sentence "For a man teacher to slap a girl pupil would be a scandal" how can "For a man teacher" be explained?*

H. M. S.

Professor Curme in *Syntax*, page 191, explains the origin of this use of *for*, which he says is a sign that the following infinitive has a subject of its own. The use of *man* as an adjective meaning "male" is listed in most dictionaries. Other examples are *manservant*, *man cook*, and *man power*.

*How would you analyze the sentence "Your evidence convinces me that I was wrong"? Is it possible to have two direct objects?*

H. W. W.

The double object is a fairly common construction in Modern English, occurring usually after certain verbs, such as *say*, *ask*, *deny*. Examples are: *We asked them their names* and *They denied him his trial*. The simplest analysis of the sentence you cite is to label both *me* and *that I was wrong* direct objects of *convinces*.

J. B. McM.

Mr. Tudor Lanius writes as follows: "In the January issue . . . is a discussion of the word 'joy' in the sentence 'He was denied the joy of freedom.' This construction has long been erroneously explained by grammarians as a 'retained object' or, worse, as a 'residual.' You have followed the misconception.

"The word 'joy' is actually a delayed subject. We have, therefore, the peculiar condition of an indirect object, 'he,' in the nominative case. The history of such expressions as this one, and the more common one, 'I was given a book,' indicates that a former dative case was arbitrarily changed to the nominative because of the feeling for the case of the subject at the beginning of the sentence."

[For a history and explanation of the construction T. L. is discussing, see C. C. Fries, *American English Grammar*, chap. x; "The Uses of Word Order," esp. p. 254. Why not call these words "retained subjects" if they are subjects? But do we not feel an active significance in the passive voice, something like "He missed (failed to get) the joy of freedom"?—EDITOR.]



## SUMMARY AND REPORT

"The Humanities in the Americas," by John Erskine, in the winter issue of the *American Scholar*, is concerned not with the war-condensed curricula but with the humanities as an applied philosophy.

The purpose of studying the humanities, originally the Greek and Latin classics, is to provide a noble rule for living: thought and action together. Primary to the Greeks was the testing of right or wrong by *aidos*, the moral instinct, then by *nemesis*, defined by Jefferson as "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind." Today we are inclined to rely upon *aidos*.

In the Constitution of the United States the familiar checks and balances are an extension into public government of weighing *aidos* against *nemesis*, for our founding fathers were versed in the humanities. Most of the constitutions of our good neighbors to the south are modeled upon ours. Knowing our philosophy, they were disappointed in our actions—for instance, refusal to participate in Bolivar's proposed Pan-American Union in 1825. Now we are attempting to make amends, but perhaps we are substituting economic benefits for the meeting on an intellectual and spiritual plane.

Their universities—the oldest one, eighty-five years Harvard's senior—carry on the tradition of Latin civilization. In addition to Latin and Greek, the graduate usually speaks French, Spanish, perhaps Portuguese, Italian. He wonders that our graduates hope to know their "fellow men without being able to converse with them."

The South Americans are well informed about us; and we could profitably become acquainted with their literature, most of which, deriving from the Greek and Latin classics and the French romantics, is more thoughtful than ours. Guided by *nemesis*, theirs is a search for universal ideas; *aidos*, our standard, has no general ideas and tends to produce a more cheerful literature.

*Ariel*, by José Rodó, published in 1900, is the classic South American statement regarding the United States. Taking the form of a farewell address delivered by a professor, it uses Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as a springboard. Caliban, the symbol of failure, devotes himself to utilitarian values without discriminating between the profound and the shallow. Ariel, the symbol of success, through his tasks becomes "more of a spirit than he was . . . at last pure significance." Rodó fears that United States may become like Caliban.

The philosophy of the humanities is difficult, but we should do well to pursue it if we value the respect of our neighbors.

In "Should We Lift the Cultural Dim-out?" John W. Dodds evaluates the need of cultural studies in peace and in war (*Saturday Review of Literature*, January 29, 1944).

During the depression the humanities suffered, but in the wartime curricula they have almost disappeared. The question is, Is culture merely an adornment of luxurious peace, or is it an aid in the face of catastrophe, giving "steel to our hearts and intelligence to our beliefs"?

The cultural dim-out is, in part, the fault of practitioners who have confused scholarship with pedantry. And the humanities have suffered from the attempt at the end of the last century to imitate the sciences. In war or peace the professor's duty to his students is to make culture usable—that of the past which they inherit, that of the future which they help shape. His to answer the young man willing to fight but not sure what he is fighting for. "In the humanities one should learn, not didactically, but in the very tissues of the disciplines themselves the grounds of relevant and courageous thought and feeling."

According to Archibald MacLeish:

Even the reformed isolationists have discovered that this war is a war, not for the continents and islands which distance can protect, but for men's minds and the kingdoms men have in their minds established—things which no oceans and no distance and no fleets of battleships could ever make secure.

The humanities, though feeding the inner resources, give spiritual toughness, which is as important as physical stamina. In Shakespearean tragedy, for instance, which teaches no neat moral lesson, one learns that, even when man goes down in seeming ruin, the invincibility of the spirit remains. Our culture is a weapon—for this is a war of ideas. We need it to counterbalance the principles of National Socialism.

In "The Metaphysicals and the Baroque," appearing in the winter issue of the *Partisan Review*, Wylie Sypher discusses the poetry of Donne and Milton in reference to artistic traditions, to literary and visual artists of the seventeenth century, and to modern poets who have been identified with the "metaphysical."

Coleridge's emphasis upon the opposition of impulses within a poem stimulated a criticism seeking complexities within a poem, which is suspect of naïveté if they are not there. With T. S. Eliot's verse and evaluation of verse, it has been supposed that this "tortured progress is akin to the 'metaphysical' poetry of the seventeenth century, and of John Donne in particular." Ransom, MacLeish, Eliot, and others have been identified with the metaphysical. Donne and Milton have been opposed, and the reputation of the former expanded while that of the latter shrank.

In the protests (of Grierson, Williams, Tillyard, and C. S. Lewis) against Eliot's attacks on Milton, the fact that both Donne and Milton belong to the baroque tradition has not been stressed.

Flamboyance was, as often as the intricacies of Donne, characteristic of the "manner" of the century. Our own restless sensibilities, rather than wide rapport with the seventeenth century, make the metaphysi-

cal attractive to us. Although Eliot has many of the discords and instabilities of the baroque, he is too tasteful to have the genuine metaphysical abandon. Metaphysical verse must be considered in relation to the whole baroque "mannerism."

Although the baroque is "mannered," there is no one baroque manner, but four: "shocking" actualism; *distortion*; the *rhetorical*, operatic "manner"; and a reaction against these three, in academic pastorals and mellow idyls.

Donne's poetry had little of the operatic, academic, or pastoral rhetoric, although he had "learned and fantastic elaborations" of conceit, but belongs more to the shocking actualism "manner." He composed with tense distortion, was rebellious, exploited effects, was sometimes ill-bred, usually mercurial, versatile, a master of psychological vocabulary, his world not stable for twenty lines, his every observation foreshortened by his perplexed egoism.

Milton and Dryden wrote in the operatic and pastoral "manners," our admiration of which is limited by our distrust of rhetoric. "The most inclusive definition of the baroque is an eccentric or hypertrophied rhetoric." The operatic baroque achieved its effects by an elaboration and emancipation of this rhetoric. Depredation of rhetoric was new with Coleridge's assumption that language is not the "dress of thought but integral with meaning." Because some rhetoric may have been abused, distaste for all rhetoric limits our understanding of the classic tradition.

"Aristotle held among the proper functions of rhetoric the *embellishment of a discourse that is soundly constructed*." Pure rhetoric, in which the *embellishment is the structure*, is to that extent false. In Crashaw's "baroque" rhetoric, the substance may be detached from the eccentric and distorted rhetoric more than can the "romantic" rhetoric of Shelley.

The rhetoric of the Renaissance and baroque, depending for effect upon tradition, was almost ritualistic, allusive, with inherent "cultural" associations. Eliot and Pound

are *allusive* but make no use of rhetoric that embellishes. When eighteenth-century rhetoric lost rococo taste and refinement, the reversion to everyday language (Wordsworth) followed.

Critics who have identified form with substance have undermined a proper evaluation of Virgil, Milton, or Pope. In a sense, poetry is ritualistic and rhetoric one of the rituals. Individualism in poetry was imperfectly expressed by the Romantic poets, who continued to practice the traditional ritual (rhetoric). With Whitman, individualism was emancipated from the ritual of rhetoric, language was functional. Eliot disapproves rhetoric in poetry because of interruption between the core and surface. An orthodox classicism or ritualistic view will not object to interruption but will assume that "substance" is distinguishable from "form." Thus Eliot's profession of classicism (royalism in politics, Anglo-Catholicism in religion) is contradictory to a criticism of Milton as artificial and conventional.

Donne, rather than Milton, is the eccentric. Milton has almost every baroque "manner," although he doesn't represent the explosive baroque. Milton is baroque in the juxtaposition of the actual with the elaborate, the idealized—and baroque inwardly as well as outwardly. Miltonic passages on God are obscure—his inscrutability more profound than Donne's. The inscrutability of Donne and Milton result from inner agitation, painful perplexity. "Donne, then, stands in genuine relationship with Milton. Both must be seen against the authentic 'movement' of the seventeenth century. When thus seen, Milton is the greatest of the baroque poets, the most polyphonic."

In the winter, 1944, issue of the *Partisan Review*, F. O. Matthiessen discusses "Henry James' Portrait of the Artist" as found in James's writing. His prefaces are a manual for authors; in addition, he has a novel about a sculptor and one about a painter, and a number of stories about writers, dealing with their psychological problems, the relations of the author and society, and

especially the relations between the writer and his audience, the lack of intelligent appreciation, and the demands of his craft.

"The Lesson of the Master" (1888), concerned with the split between art and life, dated though it may sound, deals with a choice the artist still must make. "The Author of Beltraffio" (1884) deals with the conflict which may exist between morality, art, and conventional Christianity. In this, James dramatized the aesthetic gospel of the 1880's without being sure how much of it he accepted for himself. Both Pater and James had a "passion for form" and a belief that the artist "must give the impression of life itself."

Most of James's best stories, springing from his own aesthetic convictions, were written in 1893-96—a crucial time for him. After *The Tragic Muse* and *Guy Domville* he gave up, respectively, the long novel and the theater. He was not popular with magazines. Dramatizing the problems he had been brooding over was a partial solution. The tone of "The Death of the Lion" (1894) shows he did not take his problems grimly. Despite the theme, the writing is on a comic plane. In "The Next Time" he was not so oblique, but dealt with his situation as high comedy.

The basis of "The Figure in the Carpet," a plea for mature criticism, is that a scheme should run through books "like a figure in a Persian carpet." "The title has given a phrase to the close textual criticism which he helped inaugurate. . . . The task of the critic today is to see an artist's work not piecemeal but in its significant entirety."

James was not in rapport with Meredith, Gosse, or Hardy. He appreciated Howells; but his greatest admiration was for Stevenson, because of his and Stevenson's common devotion to style. In 1914 he expressed hope for D. H. Lawrence; earlier he had hoped Kipling would be an "English Balzac."

James was attracted by H. G. Wells's abundant energy, ability to convey visible and audible life. He said: "I read [Wells] with complete abdication of all . . . principles of criticism, cannons of form, precon-



ceptions of felicity, references to the idea of method or the sacred laws of compositions." But he commented on the contradictions "of so much talent with so little art, so much life with (so to speak) so little living."

Later Wells parodied James, to the latter's bewilderment, in order to make his point that "literature, like architecture, is a means." Said James: "I am fed by life, and my value, whatever it be, is in my own kind of expression of that. . . . It is art that makes life."

In "The Madonna of the Future," concerning the problems of beginning artists, the special case of Americans is in part dramatized, their background making them the "disinherited" of art, with ten times as much to learn as Europeans. "Invent, achieve, create" [instead of indulging in idle talk], rejoins the narrator. The intensity with which James and some other artists have cared about art is a reaction against the lack of it in their milieu.

An Italian model who could look more like an English gentleman than "The Real Thing" (1893) is the theme of that fable, illustrating "the necessary doctrine of imitation for any branch of art. . . . Action must be heightened by stylization if art is to convey the essence and not the accidents of life."

The split between James (inner world, analytic subtlety) and Wells (outer world, surface reporting) was detrimental to both. And

the consequences of this split between the "highbrow" and the "lowbrow" have been especially virulent in America, fed, on the one part, by the divorce between our educated minds and experience . . . and, on the other, by the enormous premiums paid to sensationalism.

It has been the fashion in recent criticism to let Whitman symbolize lowbrow, and James, highbrow. But, although James criticized Whitman in his youth, he came to appreciate him. In his own work he overcame the genteel tradition "in the classic way, by understanding it."

Richard Levin and Charles Shattuck present in *Accent* for winter, 1944, "A New Reading of Joyce's *Dubliners*." Their theory is that *Dubliners*, like *Ulysses*, is based upon the *Odyssey*. They quote Joyce, "When I wrote *Dubliners*, I was tempted to give it the title *Ulysses at Berlin* but I changed my mind"; remind us that he insisted upon an absolutely fixed (and apparently arbitrary) order of the stories within the volume; and cite his demand that, if certain "objectionable" stories were to be omitted, there must be a note that the volume was incomplete. They quote, without considering that it may be sufficient explanation of the structure of *Dubliners*: "My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country. . . . I have tried to present it . . . under four of its aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity, and public life."

The first three stories, about a fatherless boy who, Telemachus-like, first broods over the lost father and then goes on two quests, are analogues of Books I-IV of the *Odyssey*; the next four stories analogize Books V-VIII and part of Book VIII ("Ogygia and Phaeacia"). The next four derive from Books IX-XII, Odysseus' stories of his ten years' wandering (Book IX only indirectly presented by later references, and Book XII only slightly presented). The fourth group of stories (only three) begins to use the materials of the second half of the *Odyssey* but stops short. This was originally the end of the book; but later the longest of the stories, "The Dead," was added, perhaps partly as an artistic substitute for a second series of stories Joyce is thought to have planned.

Twenty pages of detailed statement of parallels, story by story, support the Levin-Shattuck theses. They conclude that *Dubliners* gains in dignity and richness by the reader's recall of the Odyssean parallels and that the *Odyssey* is thus underscored and interlined for us by a witty reader. Moreover, the reading of *Dubliners* brings out more clearly the artist's growth to the manner and power of *Ulysses*.



## BOOKS

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

DEAR MR. EDITOR:

On second thought I really should not, I suspect, review *Basic Principles of Writing*.<sup>1</sup> Not ethical, perhaps. I happen to know three-fourths of the four authors. I even hope they are friends of mine. My case grows worse and worse.

The fact, however, that this book is a second edition should prove that it is a good book—prove it quite independently of the undersigned. That it is “revised and enlarged” should not be held against the book, really. Four professors could not hurt their own child.

First, the publishers have done well. I refuse (as another professor of English) to say that the book has been “streamlined.” But it “*definitely HAS*,” as Penny of the Funnies would say. The cover has been changed from a dignified, almost Victorian three-color (one gold) job to a two. And the red is a bit lighter and brighter than the earlier red. Distinctly the modern influence. The title-page has been *uncentered*, and the type has lost most of its serifs. The Contents has been subdivided, and useful additional page numbers help the reader. The text type is a bit better for the eye. The paper remains excellent.

The main divisions of the book are: “Procedures,” “Types,” and “Mechanics,” the last in handbook form. A scheme of reference to rules is included.

Here are some of the *enlargements*. There is a student-written “library report.” There are a group of business letters. There is a short chapter on the “technical report.” There is a persuasive section on the usefulness of the specific word. There is a proper

<sup>1</sup> W. Otto Birk, Frederick William Holmes, Harold Wesley Melvin, and Joseph Lee Vaughan, *Basic Principles of Writing*. 2d ed. Chicago: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1943. Pp. 457. \$2.00.

discussion of the hyphen and its halfway function in the evolutionary process of compound-word solidification. Rules for capitalization, for the use of numerals, and for the use of abbreviations have been added. I should like to see more about spelling in the third edition.

A chief point in the *revision* is the placing of exercises, which were grouped in the earlier edition at the end of the book, at points in the “handbook” portion immediately after the rules to be illustrated and confirmed. The exercises, too, are almost wholly new. They are now called “study checks.”

Remark should be made that the interesting treatment of tense, *with diagrams* (almost *pictures*), is retained from the first edition. Ingenious and enlightening, this device for indicating to the student the relation of the tenses to time, relations of times, and endurance of time illustrates an idea which is one of not a few ideas in the book, in variety that is no doubt the fruit of multiple authorship. Four heads may well be better than one, if they do not get in each other’s way.

With very best regards to you, Mr. Editor, and also to Professors Birk, Melvin, and Vaughan, and hoping to meet Professor Holmes sometime, I am,

Very truly yours,

J. H. MCKEE

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

### WEBSTER’S BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY<sup>1</sup>

Here is a *Who’s Who* of the ages, of all time. Pericles is listed in this congregation of forty thousand personages, and Chiang

<sup>1</sup> Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1943. Pp. xxxvi+1697. \$6.50.

Kai-shek (whose real name, as herein provided, is Chiang Chung-cheng); Homer and Hitler; Saul and Stalin; Mithridates ("more correctly Mithradates") and Mussolini—whose career, ominously enough, here concludes with the noncommittal statement: "Became ally of Germany in war (June 10, 1940)." The range is wide. To quote the publisher's statement in this connection: "Noted men and women of all countries—historical and contemporary—from every field of human activity" are brought together in this volume of immensely valuable reference.

If the consultant experiences the occasional disappointment of the omission of one of his own candidates for this Hall of Fame, he may find the reason graciously acknowledged in the Preface: "The names of persons prominent (sometimes only briefly) in sports, in motion pictures, in the contemporary theater, and in radio are so numerous that the editors were compelled, however reluctantly, to curtail their representation to the minimum." So if he looks in vain for Mickey Rooney or Bob Feller or Gabriel Heatter, he must not conclude that some invidious distinction has been intended, even though he discovers such names as Greta Garbo, Lou Gehrig, and Raymond Gram Swing.

In order to make such a work as this of still greater general use, the editors have added tables of popes, potentates, and presidents; of vice-presidents, cabinet officers, and diplomats; of justices of the Supreme Court and rulers of foreign lands. And of at least equal value for the average reader—something most of us, in fact, will find almost invaluable—is the pronunciations and indications of syllabic divisions of all surnames. All this information readily accessible in one compendious volume, not too ponderous, printed in readable type on a two-column page of good-grade paper, makes for a reference work practically indispensable. It will take its place self-confidently side by side with one's favorite dictionary, Roget's *Thesaurus*, Fowler's *English Usage*, and other such necessary

equipment for accurate and comprehensive study.

Here is to be found, indeed, almost infinite riches in relatively little room. From "Aagesen, earliest Danish historian; author of *Compendiosa Historia Regum Daniae*," to "Zworykin, television authority" (though no reader in his right mind will pursue a consecutive course throughout these pages), the gentle reader will find himself delightfully distracted by coming upon names he had no least intention, to begin with, of seeking out. This is one of the boons of such a book. He may have set out to explore Jonathan Edwards or Artur Rodzinski or Tutankhamen, only to find, after a fascinating detour, that he is reading about Eisenhower or E. P. Roe or Mme Tussaud instead. So much the better. Here is man's plenty.

R. A. JELLIFFE

#### A NOTES & QUERIES OF EXPLICATION

A steadily growing concern with the need for teaching students to read and understand literature before undertaking to conduct them into the mysteries of literary history has been evinced by English teachers during the past decade or two. The journals—and notably *College English*—have been devoting increasing space to articles which explore the meaning and values of important literary documents. In October, 1942, there appeared a new periodical, *The Explicator*, inspired by the belief that "the honest instructor cannot answer every question he has sometimes asked himself about the text." The need for this *Notes & Queries* of explication is amply demonstrated by the number and variety of the contributors to the first volume.<sup>1</sup> Not only have queries been answered but the answers have also been answered until minuscular literary controversies have flickered in its

<sup>1</sup> *The Explicator* (ed. G. W. Arms, J. P. Kirby, L. G. Locke, J. E. Whitesell), Vol. I, Nos. 1-8. Fredericksburg, Va., 1943. \$1.00.

pages. Scholars who polish their periods and qualify every generalization with double sub-subjunctives for *PMLA* here let themselves go and pack an astonishing amount of gist into three or four hundred words. Poems are frequently as well explained in a page as they might be in ten pages of formal analysis.

The editors have attempted to establish a pattern by writing two or three articles for each issue. There is, for example, a most suggestive note on Waller's "Girdle" (No. 52); and there is a bad one on Housman's "Loveliest of Trees" (No. 57), for which the editors gallantly allow themselves to be reprimanded in a subsequent issue (No. 69).

If the *Explicator's* added ounce does not break the back of literary history—and, of course, it will not—the year 2160 may see "The Influence of Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* on Twentieth-Century Analysis of Poetry," a dissertation in which copious evidence is drawn from the *Explicator*, where the Brooks and Warren technique of metrical analysis is particularly evident. But, once one masters this technique, it is a little too easy to gush over the mysterious concord of sound and sense in almost any good poem. And too easy to overdo it. It may, for example, be valuable to point out that the onomatopoeic excellence of the "quick, sharp scratch" in Browning's "Meeting at Night" is approached by "A tap at the pane" and the whispered sibilants of "a voice less loud"; but when the contributor goes on to maintain that "the space to be crossed [is] suggested by the grouping of the stresses in line 8 ('Three fields to cross')," he is performing operations that should be confined to student exercises, where they are useful. Such interpretation can be made in any line of any good poem.

One is also amused by the archness of scholarly humility, indicated by a profuse use of the exclamation point after sentences wherein scholars are admitting (in print!) that there are things they don't know.

Although the format of this excellent little paper (a 16' X 22' sheet, octavo-

folded and printed on one side) is designed so that the articles may be cut out and folded for 4 X 6 filing, the bound volume, indexed, enables one easily to check queries, answers, and further elucidations. The editors might facilitate such a use of the *Explicator* by numbering the pages and including page references in future indexes.

CHARLES C. WALCUTT

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### CANADIAN POETRY

It is to be regretted that Americans, generally, know very little about Canadian poetry, since much of it is of intrinsic worth. This indifference is partly attributable to the nature of most anthologies of Canadian poetry. They were generally compiled in the spirit of conventional romanticism, coupled with a desire to emphasize the national quality of the poetry. The tendency was to exaggerate whatever merits the poets might have, particularly if those merits were of the kind conventionally approved as poetic in the romantic sense. These tendencies were perhaps inevitable in the poetry of a society whose culture was essentially peripheral, but they did, of course, prejudice the outsider in his reading of the verse. What Canadian poetry has sadly lacked has been an anthology compiled by a critic whose bias would be cosmopolitan, even though his purpose were Canadian.

On the whole, Mr. Smith's new anthology<sup>1</sup> fulfils these conditions. He avoids overstatement of the merits of the poets; his approach is both fresh and contemporary. The anthology seems to be satisfactory as a history of Canadian poetry and as a compilation of the most meritorious of the verse.

The six sections into which the verse is collected are not all of equal merit. The first section includes some adaptations

<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Canadian Poetry*, edited by A. J. M. Smith. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943. Pp. xvii+452. \$3.50.

from the Indian and some translations of French-Canadian ballads. The adaptations seem unnecessary, while the translations are inadequate. It is difficult to see how, historically, they could have influenced future Canadian poetry written in English, to which this anthology is limited. The second section is more satisfactory. With both insight and scholarship Mr. Smith selects from the works of men on the whole little known a group of poems to show the rise of a native tradition in Canada despite the admitted pressure of the tendency toward imitation of one or another of the eighteenth-century masters. Particularly interesting are the selections from Charles Heavyside's *Saul*.

In the third and fourth sections the editorial problem is quite different. It is largely that of revaluation of those men who are the best known of the Canadian poets. The selection is fresh and involves a necessary basic re-examination of the poets. Many of the favorites of the anthologists, worn thin by familiarity, do not appear and are replaced by poems less pretentious and, therefore, probably more satisfactory to the reader.

Most interesting, however, are the fifth and sixth sections, the two sections on "Modern Poetry: The Native Tradition" and "Modern Poetry: The Cosmopolitan Tradition." Both sections show quite clearly that the critical and poetic forces that have acted upon the American and English poets of the last two decades influenced no less the Canadian poets. These influences are almost as clearly marked in the poetry included in the "Native Tradition" as they are in the "Cosmopolitan Tradition." Mr. Smith's choice of poems displays considerable reading in the works of recent poets in volumes of verse and little magazines and a keen and sympathetic insight into the material. What emerges is the impression of a considerable body of very creditable poetry. Wholeheartedly the reader can agree that

Earle Birney's poetry is "Canadian in the only way that is worth anything, implicitly and inevitably," and with somewhat less certainty he can feel that this is true of most of the poetry in this section. The native element is present in the poems grouped under that heading, but at no time is it the sole excuse for existence. The lack of self-consciousness with which the Canadian scene discovers itself suggests that Canadian poetry has come of age.

The sixth section, in which the editor includes some of his own poems, indicates clearly the international quality, not only of modern Canadian poetry, but of most modern poetry written in English. It is difficult to see where the poems would have differed markedly had they been written by an American or an Englishman. The influences of Donne, Hopkins, Eliot, and the Imagists are clear. The kinds are well known, and on the whole the poems are creditable of their kind. Of these, the most interesting are, probably, those by A. M. Klein, a man whose poetry is intensely nationalistic, but whose nationalism is Jewish, not Canadian. His poetry indicates a high level of technical achievement and great emotional depth. Particularly striking is the poem "*In re Solomon Warshawer*."

Of almost equal importance with the poetry, to many readers, will be the Introduction. Thirty-one pages in length, it is a short historical and critical survey of Canadian poetry. The necessity of reconsidering the traditional judgments of the masters of Canadian poetry—above all, perhaps, of Bliss Carman—is clearly faced. The judgments are balanced and just, both of contemporary poetry and of the older verse written in Canada. The short biographical notes preceding the selections from each poet are interesting and frequently enlightening. The annotated Bibliography should prove most useful.

A. M. I. FISKIN

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## IN BRIEF REVIEW

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

## FOR THE GENERAL READER

*Avalanche.* By Kay Boyle. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

Love and espionage; a well-planned adventure story with deftly handled plot. Beautiful glacial scenes, clean mountain air, and brilliant prose are the real Boyle touches. Many striking coincidences, but they are plausible and convincing in a tale of war and underground activities.

*The Common Thread.* By Michael Seide. Harcourt. \$2.00.

Short, compassionate stories of narrow, pathetic lives. Well written.

*Men of Good Will*, Vol. XI: *Work and Play.* By Jules Romains. Knopf. \$3.00.

Time: 1923-24. At the end of *New Day* the men of good will looked hopefully toward Russia. In Volume XI this hope has vanished. Jerplanion is now thirty-seven, has lost much of his revolutionary fervor, and is a Radical Socialist, hoping merely to save the world, to have peace. There is an exciting murder mystery, unfinished, as are other themes of the book, including any statement of the ultimate aims of the *Men of Good Will*. Rather disturbing.

*A Bell of Adano.* By John Hersey. Knopf. \$2.50.

Major Joppolo, American-born Italian, was left in charge of an occupied town in Sicily when the Fascists retreated. His understanding of the people, their customs, traditions, and desire for freedom, is symbolized by his sympathy for their sentiment in the loss of an ancient bell. Tearing up the pages of military instructions left with him, he made his own rules to dispense justice, to teach the people self-government, to make them happy. The author is a young war correspondent who took part in the Sicilian campaign and lived for months in such a town as Adano.

*The Lost Week End.* By Charles Jackson. Farrar. \$2.50.

A well-written, well-executed study of a few days in the life of a drunkard and of the people who wanted to help him. A psychological insight into the deterioration of a character.

*Liana.* By Martha Gellhorn. Scribner. \$2.50.

The eternal feminine in a man's world. Liana is in a sense a pure woman, her life more elemental because she is a mulatto, living on a small French island. Marc, the richest man on the island, marries her, though he doesn't profess to love her. She learns to live like a "white wife" and naturally is very lonely. The plot, personalities, and "the end" should develop for the reader as he brings to it his own

perceptions. It is not a race problem, and it is not sexy—at least those problems are only incidental to the author.

*A Treasury of Modern Best Sellers.* By the Editors of Omnibook. Simon & Schuster. \$3.50.

Condensations of ten best-sellers, including *God Is My Co-pilot*, *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*, *One World*, *The Human Comedy*, and others. Good reading for busy people.

*Hackberry Cavalier.* By George S. Perry. Viking. \$2.50.

The author of *Hold Autumn in Your Hand* gives us portraits of people, mighty interesting people, human nature in a Texas town. Warm, ingenious, real. Good reading.

*Mongrel Mettle.* By Jesse Stuart. Illustrated by Woodi Ishmael. Dutton. \$2.50.

Autobiography of a dog by the author of *Taps for Private Tussie*. Clever social satire. Pedigreed dog and mongrel may produce a "Democratic Race of Dogs" for a "Democratic World of Dogs."

*The Life and Death of Little Jo.* By Robert Bright. Doubleday. \$2.00.

Peasant life in an isolated New Mexican village of Spanish-speaking Americans. Elemental emotions on a simple plane. Steinbeck atmosphere.

*My Life with the Enemy.* By Phyllis Argall. Macmillan. \$3.00.

The author has spent most of her life in Japan as teacher, reporter, correspondent. She was imprisoned at the outbreak of the war and returned on the "Gripsholm." Out of her broad experience she has learned that, for the Japanese, "truth is that which benefits Japan, dishonesty that which injures her. Honor is anything which advances Japan, dishonor all that retards her. Acts which to us are unimaginably base may be, to the Japanese, the height of glory, since they spring from a patriotic motive."

*As We Go Marching.* By John T. Flynn. Doubleday. \$2.00.

The author of *Country Squire in the White House* studies those forces in our own national life which parallel those discontents and frustrations, greed and will to dominate, which grew into mass movements resulting in fascism in other countries. He believes our problem to be not how to prevent communism but how to free our country from it. A disturbing book.

*Lend Lease: Weapon for Victory.* By Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. Macmillan. \$3.00.

A thrilling, authentic, clear explanation of Lend-Lease by its administrator from 1941 to 1943: its necessity and its contribution to the cause of the Allies and to the eventual defeat of our enemies. It may be read as a report to the American people; it answers our questions. As Mr. Stettinius is mentioned as a possible Democratic nominee for the presidency, his book assumes new importance.

*A Preface to Peace.* By Harold Callender. Knopf. \$3.00.

A lucid account of the author's experiences in Europe and Latin America and his reactions to war problems and peace problems as they are now discussed by people in power. He believes in careful study of the background of countries concerned. Hitler, he says, is an expression of Germany in her least civilized mood. He favors a smashing defeat of Germany but is skeptical of the possibility of her total disarmament. A critical but balanced study of yesterday, today, tomorrow.

*Good Night Sweet Prince: The Life and Times of John Barrymore.* By Gene Fowler. Viking. \$3.50.

The career, the stage, the public, and the times of an actor who brought tears and laughter to a delighted world—only to die lonely and poor.

*An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and American Democracy.* By Gunnar Myrdal. 2 vols. Harper. \$7.50.

The over-all summary of the entire Carnegie study of the American Negro. A penetrating analysis of a problem of increasing importance.

*Sunburst.* By Mauricio Magdaleno. Translated by Anita Brenner. Viking. \$2.50.

A fictional exposé of political corruption, of a revolution destroyed by inner rot. The Indians, submerged and successively exploited by various masters, were promised relief and fought Zapata and Villa for thirty years, believing in those promises. Even a trusted man of the people betrayed his own. This moral degradation paves the way for new wars, and today a new revolt of the masses is gathering strength in Mexico. Such is the theme of this powerful tale of the people of Latin America. An excellent interpretation and translation.

*Hallelujah.* By Fannie Hurst. Harper. \$2.50.

There are readers who find the Hurst novels amusing and some who find the neurotics and amorals fascinating—between book covers. The present heroine "is pure as fire" and has lasting appeal for all men.

*A Short History of Russia.* By B. H. Sumner. Reynal. \$3.75.

Russia—the frontier, the state, the land, the church, Slavs, the sea, and the West. A compact book, although the organization brings about some

repetitions and some omissions; the result is a readable, authoritative, and short history.

*The Growth of the Red Army.* By D. Fedotoff White. Princeton University Press. \$3.75.

From June 21, 1941, to July, 1943. An analysis of the organization of the Red Army, its triumphs, and how it has held together.

*Russian Cavalcade.* By Albert Parry. Washburn. \$3.50.

The Russian soldier's stubborn courage and indomitable spirit from 1760 to the present. Handsomely illustrated, timely, and sympathetic.

*The Russian Army: Its Men, Its Leaders, and Its Battles.* By Walter Kerr. Knopf. \$2.75.

"It was not in organization that I found the real strength of the Red Army, nor did I find it solely in the youth of its generals, its manpower or munitions. I found its strength in the fighting hearts of its soldiers, in their training, their discipline, and the civilian strength behind them." This is indicative of the tone of the book. Mr. Kerr witnessed the 1939 campaign in Finland and the 1941 defense of Moscow. He spent eighteen months in Russia carefully studying the army.

*Shark's Fins and Millet.* By Ilona Rolf Sues. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

The author spent seven years in China and was personally acquainted with many celebrities and persons in authority and also with bandits, racketeers, and plain people. Interesting and well presented.

*Germany after Hitler.* By Paul Hagen. Farrar. \$2.00.

Mr. Hagen, himself a German socialist, seems to believe that the democratic socialist forces in Germany should be given the right to restore a sovereign Germany. He warns us, however, against trusting "decent conservative forces" in Germany. Mr. Hagen makes some wise suggestions, but his optimism is not shared by many students of the German people.

*Der Fuehrer.* By Konrad Heiden. Houghton. \$3.00.

Heiden warned of Hitlerism in 1920. He has made a study of Hitler's personality and his growing, sinister power. Here is an account of the political and social life of Germany, of Nazi leaders, of blood purges, of Gestapo, of powerful Göring and Goebbels, and of the caliber of Hitler's first army and supporters.

*Germany Will Try It Again.* By Sigrid Schultz. Reynal. \$2.50.

The author, from 1919 to 1941, was correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* in Berlin. She has a wide acquaintance with people in power and others in all classes. Basing her warning upon her experiences following the last war and upon her study

of the present—"Talk to interned German soldiers," she says—she believes that already Germany has made careful plans to again use well-planned devices to fool the world. Class hatred, race riots, distrust among the Allies, Soviet control, German superiority, co-operation of capitalists of other countries, zealous well-paid propagandists everywhere—all these tricks this woman who knows Germany believes Germany will use against a war-weary, sentimental Anglo-Saxon world. Germany—a stronger, wiser Germany, still seeking to dominate the world—will try it again, she says.

*What To Do with Germany.* By Louis Nizer. Ziff-Davis. \$2.50.

The author presents his case authoritatively. We must take precautions against a postwar gangster nation; poisonous doctrines must be eradicated from the German mind; education must be supervised; and Pan-Germanism must be abolished. A very important study of postwar responsibilities for the Allies. He proposes (1) demolishment of plants producing war materials, (2) division of large estates into farms for the peasants, (3) heavy economic and financial penalties with reparations, (4) execution of thousands of army officers and party and government leaders, and (5) the trial and possible death of those responsible for looting other countries.

*They Shall Not Sleep.* By Leland Stowe. Knopf. \$3.00.

A Pulitzer-Prize-winning journalist has written a provocative account, based upon personal observation in Russia, Burma, India, China. A very wise and thoughtful study of world-shaping events now taking place and of a hoped-for peace.

*How To Think about War and Peace.* By Mortimer J. Adler. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

"It is not a book of rules, as was *How To Read a Book*. It is a book of ideas to think with." Among these ideas, which the author derives from the fundamental facts of history, the chief seems to be that "the development of peace is the deepest trend in the world's history." As Fadiman summarizes in his Foreword: "Something causes peace. It is government. Something will cause world peace. It will be world government."

*Behind the Steel Wall.* By Arvid Fredburg. Viking. \$3.00.

The author is a Swedish newspaper correspondent who remained in Germany until the middle of 1943. He writes of the German people, their daily living, their hope for victory, their determination to dominate Europe some day, their reactions to bombing and Russian victories, and their loyalty to Hitler.

*Covers and Casts.* By William J. Schaldach. Barnes. \$5.00.

The author's characterization of the book as fields, sports, and angling in words and pictures is quite accurate. Really, the text is more concerned

with the action than the description of the stage for the action, as the title might suggest. Most of the many pictures are black-and-white drawings, but there are several full-color reproductions of paintings by the author.

#### FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

*The Antic Hamlet and Richard III.* By Sidney Thomas. King's Crown Press (Columbia University). Paper. \$1.50.

A graduate-student study of the relations between *Hamlet* and *Richard III* and more especially of the derivation of both these characters from the popular dramatic tradition rather than from that of the Senecan drama. Mr. Thomas thinks that these characters are both founded primarily on disguise or dissimulation, descendants of the vice and of the morality plays. "Antic" usually signified in Elizabethan literature masking carried on in the comic spirit, rarely meaning unbalanced or insane.

*An Outline of Modern Russian Literature (1880-1840.)* By Ernest J. Simmons. Cornell University Press. \$1.00.

A Cornell professor of Slavic languages and literatures here presents a brief but readable sketch of sixty years of Russian literature. In this period, he points out, there was a natural reaction from the tendentiousness of the reformist authors and critics of the middle years of the century and more attention to aesthetic elements. His critical dicta are usually quite blunt. He includes a sixteen-page bibliography of Russian literature of this period available in translation: anthologies, individual imaginative works, and critical writing.

*The Letters of George S. Gordon.* Oxford University Press. \$3.50.

The writer of these letters was president of Magdalen College from 1928 until his death in 1942 and vice-chancellor of Oxford University from 1938 to 1941. The earliest of them are addressed to his wife, who evidently has made the collection; the others, including a number written from France, are to forty other persons, both eminent and undistinguished.

*An English Pronouncing Dictionary.* By Daniel Jones. New 5th ed. Dutton. \$2.50.

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